Kedar Nath & Badri Narayan:

(A Pilgrim's Diary.)

SISTER NIVEDITA

Author of The Master as I saw Him, The web of Indian Life, Civic and National Ideals, etc.



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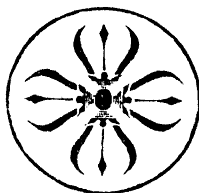
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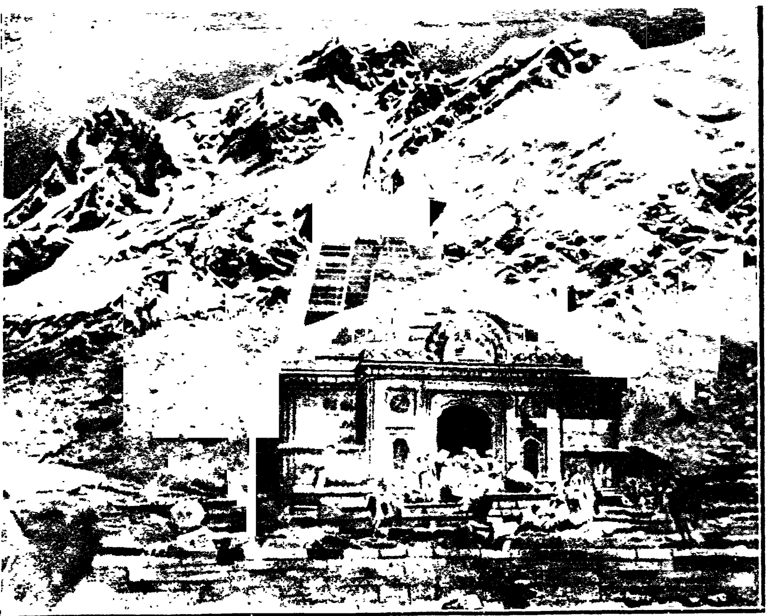
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NOTES.

The previous title of the book, "The Northern Tirtha: A Pilgrims Diary" was of too general an import to indicate to the reading public the particular nature of its contents which is a description of a pilgrimage to the famous shrines of Kedar Nath and Badri Narayan in the North of India ; and therefore it has been changed into the more particular and appropriate name of "Kedar Nath and Badri Narayan : A Pilgrim's Diary." A map of the pilgrim route and two pictures of the famous shrines have been incorporated in the present re-print, which we hope, will be appreciated by the public.

PUBLISHERS.



Temple of Kedarnath

KEDAR NATH AND BADRI NARAYAN: A PILGRIM'S DIARY.

Place	Distance.	Remarks on Accommodation.
Hardwar		
Satya Narain 7 miles	o	—
Hrishikesh		
Lakshman Jhula 3 miles	12 miles	Dharmsalas, an inspection bungalow.
Phool Chatty 5 miles		
Mohun Chatty	14 miles	Dharmsalas and chappars.
Dakbungalow Bijni 3 miles		
Bandar Chatty 6 miles		
Mahadeo Chatty	12 miles	Dharmsala and chappars
Kandi 6 miles		
Vyasagunga	10 miles	Dharmsala long disused, chappars.
Devaprayag	9 miles	Dharmsala A small city and bazar.
Dak Bungalow Kolta key Ranibagh		
Rampur	10 miles	Temporary accommodation
Bilwakedar	5 miles	Temporary accommodation
Srinagar	3 miles	A city Dharmsalas and Dak bungalow.

"Imagine!" said one of our party suddenly, as we sat at a meal somewhere on the road between Kedar Nath and Badri Narayan "Imagine! we are only ten or twelve days from Manasa Sarovara, and the people call all this country Kailas! *We are in*

Kailas!" We were indeed. And to add to that fact we had entered the land of promise by the old historic road. Beginning with Hardwar,—that miniature and unspeakably beautiful Benares—and passing through Hrishikesh, we had ascended step by step, march by march, from one holy place to another, side by side with pilgrims from every province in India, till we had reached the crown of them all at Kedar Nath ; and were now on the way to Badri Narayan, thence to return to ordinary life and work, in our homes in the plains. It was a wonderful word, this that we were in Kailas, and we all sat for a moment, pondering on its meaning. Amongst the pines and deodars, with mountain-flowers underfoot, and hoary places of pilgrimage behind and before, it was not incredible. But we needed to drink deep for awhile of the thought, that we might realise the Invisible Presence inhabiting and consecrating the holy home.

It is very characteristic, that while Hinduism lays great emphasis on the sacredness of the northern pilgrimage, it is yet difficult to obtain any authentic information about its details, before one starts. For this reason it seems almost obligatory upon those who perform it, that they should, if possible, publish their experiences, for the guidance of others, who are eager to undertake it. At present, there is very little that the intending traveller can make sure of, either as regards time, distances, or the accommodation available. And few things are more necessary

than the frank publication of the actual diary of some pilgrim, to which all the would-be adventurous may obtain easy access. The setting-forth need not afterwards be that plunge in the dark which it is at present. A man may then calculate freely the time and means at his disposal, and make such provision as is possible to him, for the difficulties and perhaps the dangers of his undertaking.

The one piece of advice that one would like to give all intending travellers is the importance of securing a good *panda*—as the semi-ecclesiastical courier is called—at the beginning of the journey. We were lucky enough to fall in with *Gopal Panda* of Kedar Nath, when we were at Hardwar, and to take him with us, and no words can tell of his value. He was full of energy and resource. He saw us through every difficulty, and his social influence smoothed over many delicate matters, probably. A *panda* should not be too scholarly, as in that case he is sure to be defective in energy ; yet his fund of local information is a great sweetener of the road.

The first impression gleaned from the pilgrimage as a whole is a deepened sense of Indian unity. And this is created in us, not only by the crowds of wayfarers—from the Punjab, Maharashtra, Madras, Malabar, the North-West Provinces, and Bengal,—whom we meet or pass, hour after hour. It is also due to the fact that here on this northern pilgrimage, the great *pujari*-brahmins and mohunts are all Deccanis. Even the *pandas*, on the Badri Narayan

road, are south-country men. In the case of Kedar, however, the *pandas,* whatever their historical origin, are now firmly established in the locality, and our own guide, philosopher and friend was a man who belonged to the village of Ban Asur. The mohunts, or as they are called, Raouls, of Kedar Nath, Badri Narayan, and other sacred places, are bound to nominate their disciples from the south only. And thus is kept alive the tradition of those spiritual impulses which within the last thousand years have come always from the farthest end of India. First Magadha and then Dravida-desha has originated the waves that have transformed the Himalayas ; but in either case the fact is equally conspicuous, that the Motherland is indeed one, that north and south are inextricably knit together, and that no story of its analysed fragments, racial, lingual, or political, could ever be the story of India. There must be recognition of a synthesis, to do justice to that tale. For the Indian peoples have in the past known how to shape themselves as a unity, definite and coherent, and behind them stands ever the Motherland, one from end to end.

To Indians themselves, if they have never before been on pilgrimage, the life of the pilgrim-roads is likely to be a revelation. Who uttered a doubt that India had a place and a life for women? Certainly none who had ever seen a pilgrimage. Marching along we meet them, singly or in couples, or may be in long strings of tens and twenties, old and young

mingled together. There is neither fear, nor exaggerated shyness in their demeanour. Sometimes one will be separated by a few yards from the party, telling her beads, or lost in solitary thought. Sometimes again we meet an old woman who seems to belong to none. But almost everyone is cheerful, and almost all, from the custom of wearing their jewels all the time, have an air of festivity and brightness. All pilgrims know one another. Here, none of the stiffness of a meaner world prevails. We all speak to one another as we pass. 'Jai! Kedar Nath Swami ki Jai!' or 'Jai! Badri Bissal lal ki Jai!' we say to each whom we meet, whether man or woman. And no words can describe the flash of sweetness and brightness that lights up the reply. We are all out on a holiday together, and an air of gentle innocence and hilarity prevails, in face of difficulties, and creates a sort of freemasonry amongst all who seek the common goal. One has the chance here of studying the refinement of eastern salutations. Sometimes a way-farer passes, who is telling her beads, or who, for some reason or another does not care to break her silence, but oh, the dignity and charm of the bow that answers the pilgrim's salutation in such a case! Even here, in an environment which is in some ways one of intensified practicality, we meet now and again with the inveterate dreamer, living in that world upon whose shores no wave can break. It was turning into the wedge-shaped ravine of Garurganga that we came upon one such. She

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was a little old woman, and we caught her just as she had stepped out of her prim little shoes, placed neatly behind her, and with rapt look prostrated herself. Two people who were coming forward, drew back at this, that she might not know herself interrupted, and then as again we stepped forward and came face to face with her, we saw that for the moment she was lost in the world of her own reverence. In her eyes was the look of one who saw not the earth. It was a sudden glimpse of the snow mountains to which she had paid involuntary homage.

Climbing over some peculiarly difficult boulders in the dry bed of a torrent, we met two old women, both almost blind, and bent half-double with age and infirmity. They were coming back from Badri Narayan. The place was terrible, and as we came up to them one of them stumbled. But to an ejaculation of concern, they replied, between themselves, with an air of triumph in their gaiety, "What ! Is not Narayan leading? And since He has given *darsana*, what does this matter?"

Happy they whose pilgrimage can begin at Hardwar ! Never surely was there a place so beautiful. It is like Benares on a very small scale. But as one of our party remarked, people go to Benares to die, and to Hardwar as the beginning of a high undertaking. This of itself confers on the town an air of brightness. In the moonlight nights the *jatris* set out with their *pandas*, singing, as they go, along the roads. And oh, the evening worship of the

Ganges? In the very middle of the lowest step of the semicircular ghats of the Brahma Kund a priest stands waving what looks like a small brass tree of flame. Behind him crowd the worshippers, chiefly women, and on the bridge and island that stretch across the little bay in front of his, forming the chord of the semi-circle, stand and sit other worshippers, obviously, to judge by differences of dress and type, travellers from many and various provinces. All is rapt silence, which the public worship is proceeding, but as it ends, the whole multitude breaks out into chanting. Choir upon choir, they sing the glories of the Ganges, answering each other in the manner of an antiphon. And away beyond them stretch green islands and wooded heights, about which the blue veil of the evening mists has just begun to fall. The very scene, in itself in the perfection of praise. "Oh ye mountains and hills, bless ye the Lord! Praise Him and magnify Him for ever! Oh ye rivers and streams, bless ye the Lord! Praise Him and magnify Him for ever!"

It is the railway, we are told, that has popularised Hardwar. Until a few years ago, Kankhal had been long the recognised centre, and people made pilgrimage only to Hardwar, for bathing and praying being exceedingly careful to be back before nightfall, so probable was the appearance of a tiger on the road between the two places. But the fact that the habit of pilgrimage could persist at all under such circumstances, is eloquent testimony to the age

of the place. Kankhal itself, a couple of miles away. is the seat of Siva as Daksheswar, and therefore, we cannot doubt, one of the most ancient sites of Hinduism. Here we are shown the very place where Sati fell, and that where Daksha offered sacrifice. Suddenly a whole chapter of pre-Hindu Hinduism—perhaps ages long—becomes visible to us. We see that there was a time when people were familiar with the image of the Goat-headed Lord of Creation. We remember the Great God Pan of the Greeks, with his one goat-foot. And we do not wonder that there should have been a struggle between this old nature-god Daksha, who may have been a personification of the Polar Star, and the new Siva, Lord of the consciences of men.

HRISHIKESH, twelve miles away from Hardwar, is a university of an ancient type. Here, amongst some of the most beautiful scenery of the Himalayas, just at the rapids of the Ganges, are hundreds of straw hunts in which live *sadhus*. Amongst these, it is doubtless possible to realise the ideal of the Vedic *Ashramas*, in a life of simplicity, order, and learning The first duty of the new arrival is, as I have heard, to build his own hut. Within these, men live alone or in couples, according to the merciful custom that usually carries the begging friars forth, not alone, but by twos. But when evening comes, at any rate in the winter, the great meditation-fires are lighted here and there, in the open air, and seated round them the monks discourse 'of settled things.' Then they

relapse by degrees into the depths of thought, and when darkness has fallen and all is quiet, one after another each man slips quietly away to his own hut. It is an extraordinary combination of freedom and society, of the ideals of the hermitage and of the monastery. It may be that it gives us a glimpse of the monastic conditions of the Thebaid, but in modern times it could certainly be paralleled nowhere outside India. The *sadabratas* in the little town close by are another institution that correspond to nothing in foreign countries. Here the *sadhus* daily receive their rations of food, some cooked and some uncooked. For it is a mistake to think that those who have taken up the life of the *sannyasin* can study and think, without a certain amount of bodily nourishment. Our selfishness may make us eager to preach such an ideal, but it will always be for *others* to realise! At the same time the *sadabratas* relieve the monks of the dishonour of becoming beggars, and the community of the scandal of a disorderly burden. These, in their present high organisation and development, owe a great deal to the life and work of Kamliwálá Bábá, one of the national heroes whose name is known too little, outside monastic ranks. By his labours, the Northern Pilgrimage has been rendered available, for the thousands of pilgrims who now pass along it, and it is to be hoped that in the movement now going on for the recovery of biographies, his will not be forgotten. The present road from Hardwar to Hrishikesh, with its new

temple and bazaar of Satya Narayan, is of Kamliwálá Bábá's making, as are all the good *dharmasalas* along the road. The old way to Hrishikesh by along the Ganges-bank. In the desert-like country about Hrishikesh, one of the characteristic charities is the little water-and-mat stations, where a *gerua*-turbanned servant lives in a little hut, serving out water to each passer-by who asks for it, and keeping a clean space swept and cowdunged where anyone can lie down a mat in the shade of a tree.

How old is Hrishikesh? In its very nature it is impermanent. The materials of which it is built this winter will not remain after next summer's rains. And how long the site has been used in this way who shall say? May be the history of Hardwar would give us some clue to this. May be the Kumbha Mela would help us to calculate its age. The very fleetingness of its buildings must have lengthened its days, for political convulsions that would sweep clean the Caves of Ajanta or Ellora, would leave this winter-resort of the learned and pious entirely unaffected. As the waters of a lake close over a stone, so would Hrishikesh recover from catastrophe and grow out of its very memory. And the tradition goes, we must remember, that one of the earliest literary undertakings of our people—the division of the Vedas by Vyasa, into four—was carried out in this place.

Aboout a mile or less below the Bridge of Lakshman Jhula, four miles further on, is the official

weighing station where loads and prices are authoritatively apportioned. Rates have been raised lately, but it is a great satisfaction to have a definite scale of charges and a reasonable contract on both sides. The once concluded, the coolies let us see that they are overjoyed to start on the journey, and consider themselves as much pilgrims as we! *Lakshman Jhula* has a temple beside it, and a ghat known as Dhruva's. A sudden depth in the water here is known as the Pandavas' Pool. We are now in the Gorge of the Ganges, and continues so for some four miles longer. At the end of this, with its beautiful scenery, is Phoolbari, or Phool Chatty. Five miles after, along a narrower stream, we come to *Mohun Chatty,* in a wide valley. Here only accommodation consists of a *dharmsala* and mat-covered *chhappars* or huts. The *dharmsala* with its metal roof is exceedingly hot. It contains a few small mud-walled and mud-floored rooms with a large common verandah outside. Such provisions as are obtainable, along with vessels for cooking, are to be had from the local shop-keeper. Here then we settle down for the day and night. What a pity for the extreme artificiality that makes it impossible for us to rest in public, like the simple folk who go and come around us! Yet so it is. Were we at home, we should even require doubtless to have seclusion from each other. Here, however, we are thankful enough for the white sheet and baggage that enable us to be a family, apart from other families. Within our

screened room we sit and try to keep as cool as may be. But, to one at least, comes again and again the thought that she is in just such an inn as that to which at Bethlehem in Judæa once came two wayfarers and found "no room." All about us outside are the open-air cooking fires and the reedroofed shelters of such as have found no place in this grander *dharmsala*. Suppose anyone to-night should come too late, and finding 'no room,' be turned away?

We were awakened by the *pandas* at Mohun Chatty at about two in the morning. All round us in the darkness we could hear women urging their companions to be up and off. And as each little party made ready to start, we could see it stand and beat time till the *panda* gave the word "Jai Kedar Nath Swami ki Jay!" or something of the sort, and then on the instant, cheerily footing it off, gentlefolk, coolies, and all. As we swung along the roads in the darkness, we had to take some care where we set out foot. For up here on the hillside numbers of pilgrims had lain down to rest, apparently, wherever they had found themselves when they grew tired. Here they lay sleeping, stretched across the pathway, their heads lifted on their little bundles, asking no better roof than the starry sky above. Oh, to reach the simplicity of such an outlook upon life!

Three miles beyond Mohun Chatty, after continuous climbing, we come upon the little dak bungalow of Bijni, of which the key is kept in the bazaar, half a mile further. Another five miles brings us, with

a sharp descent, to Bandar Chatty, where the logs are piled up. Four miles further still, making altogether thirty-eight from Hardwar, is *Mahadeo Chatty*.

This is nothing but a pilgrim's centre. Again we are in a *dharmsala*. Only it must be said that here there are two, one across the river of stones on our right hand side. We stand a little apart from the village, too, with its multitude of *chatties*. But this advantage is less real than imaginary, for later on, when the rest of the pilgrims arrive, they camp about us here, and the resources of the place are taxed to their utmost. The river on our left, as we came along the road to-day, was beautiful with dark crags and snow-white sands. Here in the midst of its rushing coolness with the burning sun overhead, one understands for the first time, the physical rapture of the religious bathing of Hinduism. We find the same to be true again at the little village of Vyasaganga. Here the different mountain ranges seem all to recede from one another simultaneously, and leave a great open circle, through which the main current of the Ganges sweeps immense curves, with vast sandy beaches on either hand ; and then before leaving this natural theatre, it turns to receive, on its left hand side, the swift clear torrent of the Vyasaganga, with its black transparent water mingling in the milky-brown of the larger stream. At the junction of the Vyasaganga the road from Lansdowne enters the place. Here the little mat-covered huts, so like old Italian pictures, were peculiarly beautiful,

and the grander accommodation of a *pucca* building peculiarly bad. So, after breakfast, we all adjourned from our dirty iron-roofed upper story,—which had not been cow-dunged since the day of its birth apparently!—to one of the neat empty *chappars*. Here there was a slight breeze, and by means of wet sheets and towels, it was not impossible to keep off the sun.

An imaginary line separates the floor of one family or party in such structures from that of the next. And we could feel ourselves real pilgrims, as we rested, with our books, and listened to the gentle conversation, or the reading of the *Kedar Kanda*, all about us. At half past three, no one could have told by the senses alone that there was any change in the light. The fierce blaze continued just as before. Yet at that moment exactly an old woman, not far off, rose, girded herself for the road, took up her staff, and, followed by two daughters-in-law, in red saris and bodices, with bundles on their heads, set forth into sun and heat. What determination, what austerity spoke in her grim old face! Thousands of years of character were in that simple act. Then the afternoon march began, for others, also; and an hour or two later the pilgrims who would camp here for the night came up, and all the distant places of the shore became bright with cooking-fires. On the mountains, too, the night made visible the forest-fires, and over all poured down the moonlight, throwing the wooded

hills into strong shadow against the silver blueness of the river, and the snow-whiteness of the sands.

Our men were very anxious to reach DEVA-PRAYAG. It was the home of some of them, and it was in any case in their beloved Tehri territory. For the river at this part of the route had been agreed upon as the boundary between Tehri and British India. A ten miles' march was nothing to them, when their enthusiasm was awakened, and we reached our destination next day quite early. It was interesting, as we set out on the road from Vyasa-ganga, to note, ere it left the open valley and turned in between the hills, the small temple of Vyasa standing on the river-bank. Here in the days when the characteristic culture of the epoch lay in a know-ledge of the Mahabharata, and when the effort of all this region was to appropriate the scenes and incidents of the great work, here it was possible for the pious pilgrim to make salutation at the feet of master-poet before entering on the sacred way. Up to this time the only mention of the Pandavas that we had come upon had been the name of a bathing pool at Lakshman Jhula. But this was easily accounted for. There would be an ever-present tendency to create such associations, acting through-out modern times. From the moment of passing Vyasaganga, however, we were in Mahabharata country, and this little chapel of the prince of poets, proved that it was the Mahabharata as a poem, that

we were following, not a tissue of pre-literary and pre-historic Pandava traditions.

The ten miles to Devaprayag lay through beautiful scenery, but along narrow thread-like paths running above high precipices. The men burst into shouts of joy at the sight of the place, but we had been so spoilt by the open expanded beauty of the other places we had seen, that we were much disappointed to find it dark, crowded on the steep points of sharply sloping hills brought together by the junction of two rapid and powerful streams, and huddled and grim in style. The houses seemed all to stand on tip-toe behind each other, to see the river. In the evening, however, when we walked in the bazar, seeing the homes of the people from the other side, we caught many a glimpse of an interior, ending in a verandah that seemed to be suspended in mid-air over the waters, and then we understood the idea of Devaprayag, that it was not built, like Benares, for splendour of approach, but rather for actual enjoyment of its wonderful river. Hence the beauty of the place is all within. And certainly no race with sense open to the awful, could have refrained from building a city at Devaprayag. I have missed many chances of seeing Niagara, but I cannot imagine that it is any grander than the sight of the gorge as one stands on the bridge at Devaprayag. Nor can I conceive of anything more terrible than the swirl and roar of the rivers here, where the steps lead down over the living rock to the meeting of the

Alakananda and Bhagirathi. Wind and whirlpool and torrent overwhelm us with their fierceness of voice and movement. The waters roar, and a perpetual tempest wails and rages. And as long as a thing is too much for one's mind to grasp, does it matter whether it is once or fifty times too much? Infinite is the terror of the waters at Devaprayaga. Victory to the Infinite! Glory to the Terrible!

The point of land at the confluence, is a rock about two hundred and fifty feet high. On the top is a temple with a very large enclosure containing many shrines and sacred objects. How ancient is the site one trembles to think, for the *prayag* is dedicated to Siva, by a hundred unmistakable signs, and the temple is of Ramachandra! This identity of Rama with Mahadeva was a matter that held the thoughts of Hindu folk a very very long time ago. To judge by it, the dedication might be sixteen, or seventeen, or more, hundreds of years old. That the continuity of the site as a holy place has been maintained, is seen, moreover, when one finds a little Siva-chapel under this main mound, containing images of Ganesh and of Devi, and one emblem of Siva of the sixth to seventh century type. There is a tradition that Sankaracharya visited Devaprayaga. Well may he have done so. But he did not make it Saivite. Its worship of Siva is of a pre-Sankaracharyan type.

The *dharmsala* which we occupied here was a delightful piece of architecture. It consisted of two

storeys, of which we occupied the upper. It was built of mud and timber, and had immense bo-trees outside. The upper floor consisted of a large verandah with a row of pillars running down the middle from end to end, and one little room tucked into the corner. It was like the realisation of a cave at Ajanta or Ellora as a welling-house. But alas, it was set with its face to the *prayaga,** which we could not see, even then, and its back to the wind-filled gorge, and in all the heat of the turbid night that we spent there, there was not a breath of air!

We were off early next day, to do ten miles and reach a halting-place called RAMPUR. On the way, we passed a dak bungalow called Kolta, for which, had we desired to use it, we ought to have taken the key at the Ranibagh Bazar, half a mile earlier. On reaching Rampur, we could not dream of consenting to stay. There was no *dharmsala* and even the *chappars* were only woven of boughs. There was no water either, except what was horribly dirty, and the dried-up stream, with its bed and banks full of nameless horrors, looked like the haunt of all disease. We decided, though it was already late, to push on to BILWAKEDERA, five miles further. On arriving there, we found that there was no accommodation for a night's stay. We could only cook and eat a meal, rest, and then proceed some three miles further to

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* It ought to be explained, for non-Hindu readers, that *prayag* means simply confluences, or junction, and that these geagraphical points are held peculiarly holy, in Hinduism.

Srinagar. Even the rest was not without its perils, in our leaf and bough-woven shelters. If it had not been for a tiny *pucca* hut that stood by the river-side *a propos* of nothing at all, we might all have ended our halt by an attack of sunstroke. As it was, we took possession unimpeded, and so were able to mitigate the fierceness of the exposure, by taking turns at resting there.

The scenery from Devaprayaga to Bilwakedara had been bare and austere,—narrow winding gorges, steep precipices, and little hanging paths. Once or twice we had passed a few pine-trees, only to come again immediately on bo-trees and cactus. It is really in the Himalayas, by the way, that the bo-tree is worshipped. More or less of an exotic, in those hot valleys, it is treasured where it occurs, and terraces are built about it, till it becomes quite a land-mark. The bazar at Kotdwara is built on two sides of a long parallelogram, down the middle of which run three terraced bo-trees. There is no need to speak of its uniqueness, amongst trees of a lesser growth. Where the small hill-mangoes rarely ripen, the density and coolness of the bo is unexampled. For centuries, in fact, its shade has been the village school. And the saying that when thunder is heard, schools should break up, is said to be a tradition of this fact.

At Bilwakedara a small stream joins the Ganges, and on a high rock which rises just at this point, stands a charming little temple. Opposite is said to

be the place where Markandeya went through his *tapasya,* and there, when *amabasya* falls on a Monday there is always a specially marked celebration. I was overjoyed at this fact, for I had expected to trace out something of the history of Mother-worship, on our way up the mountains, and here was a most important link, perhaps the last and greatest of all. The temple of Bilwakedara itself is to Siva, and contains many fragments of old and extremely refined carvings. The priests say that it was formerly immensely wealthy in these remains of a great age, but that the Gohonna Flood, fifteen or twenty years ago, swept all into the Ganges, what remains being only the little that could be recovered. There is an old Siva of the sixth to seventh century type, and one little figure which might be the teaching Buddha. Again there is a carved footprint, and a beautiful lotus in the pavement. Besides all which, there are many early Narayanas and Devis. Evidently a very ancient site, marked by great energy of the higher religious activities. Was there an early monastery here?

In the evening we reached Srinagar.

II.

Place.	Distance.	Remarks on accommodation.
Srinagar,	18 miles	from Devaprayaga—A City with dharmsala and dak bungalow.
Battisera,	8 miles	
Chhantikhal,	1½ miles	Dak bungalow. Two villages with chappars.
Rudraprayag or Pundar,	11 miles	City. Dak bungalow and dharmsalas.
Agastyamuni,	12 miles	Dharmsalas. Kund Chatty, 9 miles.
Gupta Kashi,	10 miles	Dharmsalas.
[Pilgrimage to Triyugi Narayan begins here]		
Fatta Chatty,	7 miles	Dharmsalas.
Bhim Chatty,	3 miles	
Rampur Chattya,	2 miles	
Gouri Kund,	10 miles	Dharmsalas.
Rambarrah,	4 miles	
Kedar Nath,	8 miles	Panda's guest house.

We reached SRINAGAR on the evening of the twenty-third, or five days after leaving Hardwar. The present town stands near the centre of a wide flat vale, in which the cactus and the bo-tree proclaim a sub-tropical climate. It is obviously new having been rebuilt on a slightly different site, so lately as the time of the Gohonna Flood about fifteen years ago. This event was a great epoch-

maker, throughout the valleys leading up to Badri Narayana. It has swept away ancient temples and immages, and necessitated the rebuilding of many a town and village. One cannot but mourn the loss of historic remains of priceless interest, but at the same time one suspects that, from a sanitary and cleansing point of view, this flood may have done more good than harm. Like the Great Fire of London in 1667, it seems to have wiped out the past, and banished disease-germs as well as carvings. Perhaps the living men and women on the pilgrim-roads have more cause to bless than to lament its memory.

Srinagar has been rebuilt, as already said, since the flood, but the site of the older city is still evident enough, as one enters from the south, by clustering of temples and shrines, amongst the cactus hedges and peepul-trees of the wide open plain. There are many still older temples to be seen from the road, of a ponderous and severe beauty in a type immediately preceeding that of mediæval Orissa. They are comparatively small but marvellously perfect. The style must have persisted long in the Himalayas, hence there are examples of it, in more developed and slender form, even here at Srinagar, as modern as two hundred years old, but the earliest examples must be very old indeed dating from the days of the Hindu Revival under the Guptas, that is to say from about 400 A. D. or even earlier. Even the town of Srinagar, as it was the time of the flood was only founded, it is said, by Rajah Ajaipala in the year

1446, so that it could not be regarded as old from an Indian point of view. But the fact is that there must always have been a city here, ever since the Himalayas began to be inhabited, and certainly ever since the coming of the Asokan missions.

The geographical situation, in the midst of a valley that is almost a plain, forces the formation of an organic centre. The height is only about sixteen hundred feet above the sea, so it supports a sub-tropical vegitation and at the same time is accessible to all the cooler airs of the higher mountains. We can well imagine how the first colony of Buddhistic monks would gradually settle down, and live their monastic life, with its regular worship, preaching, and study, contented in the main to become an organic part of the life about them. Actual traces of their occupation have all been obliterated long long ago, but wherever we find a very old religious dedication, which has been a sheet-anchor of worship for century after century, we may infer with some certainty that it was established by them. Such centres exist at Srinagar in the Temples of Kamaleswara and of the Five Pandavas. Of the two, Kamaleswara is probably the older. The story told in the Purnas of the Mother, is here appropriated to Siva, and He appears as the god to whom Rama made the offering of blue totuses! There is a Siva here of Pre-Sankaracharyan type, and the temple stands in a large and ancient enclosure, round which are houses and other buildings. Vaish-

navism also has flowed over Kamaleswara in its time, for there are scores of votive tablets carved with the feet of the Lord. But the place has never forgotten its Saivite origin, and claims to have been visited by Sankaracharya, which we should certainly expect to have been the case. The old temple of the Five Pandavas, stands on the roadway into Srinagar.

Was there once an intention of laying out the whole country with temples dedicated in order to the heroes and munis of the national epic? One shrinks from the thought of a task so gigantic, but there seems some reason to think it may have been contemplated, and the fact that most of these must since have dissappeared, is no real argument against it. The Himalayan kingdom has always been in such vital contact with the Hinduism of the plains, through sadhus and pilgrims and merchants, that it has shared to the full in each period as it rose, and each wave has been followed by another striving to efface the traces of that which preceded it. In this particular temple of the Five Pandavas, the Vaishnavism of Ramanuja has left its mark. There is a grotesque image of Narada worshipped here which is said to commemorate the primeval *swayambara*, where Narayana chose Lakshmi to be his spouse. The bride shrank from the appearance of Narada, who sat immediately in front of his master, and looked at Narayana himself instead. This was indeed the end to be attained, for she was the destined bride of God. But the method involved a wound to

Narada's self-love and for this he cursed Vishnu—the devotee cursed God!—saying that in a future birth as Rama he would have trouble with this wife. This is evidently a late and corrupt tale, intended to appropriate an image said to be Narada's, and to synthetise all the developments through which Vaishnavism had already passed, claiming them as historic phases of the mediæval form preached by Ramanuja.

Vaishnavism made a strong impression at Srinagar. It seems to have been held meritorious to make a pilgrimage there, and give offerings at the shrine of Lakshmi-Narayana, in lieu of going all the way to Badri Narayana. There is one grand old temple, erected, for this purpose, four hundred years ago. Unfortunately it is now surrounded by a cactus-hedge, and is therfore inaccessible. It was superseded two hundred years later by a building of much poorer architecture. But the traditions are interesting. The Garura in front of the later temple is said to be inferior to that which originally stood there. This, it is said, was so beautiful that it flew away! 'Even this,' the guide will add, with pardonable pride in local gods 'is such as you will not often see'. Alas, I could not share his high opinion of the present Garura as a work of art!

There have been many Srinagars, and one of them at least would seem to have been connected with the consecration of a great rock alter to Devi. If the tradition is to be trusted, human sacrifice was

practised here, and there is a story of the splendid indignation of Sankaracharya, who hurled the stone of sacrifice upside down into the river, and left to the sight of future generations only its bottom. If this was so, Sankaracharya would appear not only as the enemy of Tantrikism, but also as the reformer of Mother-worship, in this matter. The rock is some miles out of the present town, and stands near a great deodar cedar on the opposite bank.

From Srinagar, we went eight miles, and stayed at a dak bugalow called CHHANTIKHAL. The dharmsala here is only six and a half miles from Srinagar, and is called BATTISERA. It is very unsheltered, in a ravine, and there is little water. There is no other dharmsala for about four miles, but this march is through beautiful forest, and two and a half miles are descent. At Chhantikhal we were for the first time amongst the pines. How wonderful it is to lie awake at night and listen, and darkness, to the sound in their branches, like the song of the sea, "Parabrahman! Parabrahman!" There is no undergrowth in a pine-forest, and every evil or unclean thing is spontaneously banished. Insects flee from their strong hot fragrance, and even flies ceases to be troublesome. How grand is India, possessing within her boundaries every kind of beauty! She could not but be the home of a vast and complex civilisation.

RUDRAPRAYAGA, eleven miles beyond Chhantikhal, is the last halting-place on the common road to Kedara and Badri. It is magnificent. Immense crags

and boulders lie piled beside the stream, and the water boils and foams in its rocky bed. Here the Alakananda and Mandakini meet, and lower down, at Devaprayaga, we had seen the junction of this united stream with the Bhagirathi or Ganges proper. But it must be understood that to the people who live along their banks each one of these rivers is the Ganges itself. Each one is holy. Each man's local river is to him the head-water of the sacred flood. This is a spirit one cannot refuse to admire. Rudraprayag is a little place built on the point between the streams. There is a long temple-stair, as at Devaprayag, leading down to the Prayaga, and a couplt of small temples set at the top. It is said to have suffered terribly in the floods. The old temple was literally carried away. On the near side, the mountains have receded slightly and left room for a grove of mangoes and bo, while on the slopes behind, and and far above, are the pines with their perpetual chant.

At AGASTYAMUNI, after twelve miles of journey, we entered a more obscure and ancient world. The road from Rudraprayaga onwards had been terrible, but the scenery wild and beautiful. Everything henceforth was on a smaller scale. Agastyamuni itself was the most primitive of places. Here the Rishi Agastya had done his *tapasya*, they said. The same is told of Kashmir, a valley formed in the same way as this. Comparing the two and remembering that the rishi is said to have drunk up the ocean, we

were all inclined to regard the tale as a geographical myth, referring to a time when the valley was a lake. The soil is so evenly placed here, as also in the vale of Srinagar, that there is no room to doubt that it really was once a lake, and that geologically speaking, at no distant epoch. Are myths like this of Agastyamuni, dim memories of something seen by primitive man, or are they a kind of Physical Geography, deliberately invented for educational purpose? The last suggestion does not sound so absured at the place itself, as it certainly does on paper. At Agastyamuni, for the first time, we found the temple enclosing a sqare which once contained the village, and even now held several dharmsalas. We had seen this square already in the temple of Kamaleswara, but there it was within a building in a large town ; it did not itself stand as the principal feature, and constitute what was evidently the old market-place. The fields about Agastyamuni were very beautiful. Great trees offered shadow here and there, and pebble banks ran by the side of the road, as we left the place next day. Under a great bo, we found a number of exquisitely beautiful images, gathered together as a Kshetra-Pal. These attested the old importance of the place. But the heart of the whole was the temple. The great court, they told us, was the scene of Agastyamuni's *tapasya*, and he was commemorated by an image in the principal chapel. But there was a strong guddee in the middle with a smaller seat beside it, which the people re-

garded as the throne of Ramachandra. This is only one of many signs of the ancient and deep-seated impression made on this region by the Ramayana. All through our visits to sacred spots, we ~~were~~ find that 'the age of Rama' was used as an indication of profound antiquity. There is an idea that the hero himself once visited these parts. And every village otherwise nameless is called Rampur, or something equivalent. "This place has been here since the days of Ramachandra," they say, as the utmost that they can conceive in age. Hence the two seats in the old court of Agastyamuni have a significance of their own, whatever their actual function may have been.

But besides this, there are a thousand interesting scraps. In the porch there is an image of Narasinha. In some of the chapels there are plaques and masks of the Nine Planets, of Narada, of Ganesh, and of old Buddhist carvings. Some one brought here the head of a stone Bodhisattva. There is also a chapel to Sringi Rishi, the father of Shamika, in the Adi Parva of the Mahabharata. And there is an ordinary Siva in an old square watercourse, while outside there is an emblem that ought to be famous for its peculiarity of form, a dharmachakra that is really a Siva of pre-Sankaracharyan type. The people call it a Brahmamurti, which fact is again almost as important as the form itself. Four wheels or chakras are placed one on each side of the top of a short pillar. The top of the pillar is a cube as is also its foot ; but

its shaft is octagonal. The cube surmounted by the octagonal shaft, surmounted by a thimble-shaped top, is the form of Siva which was common before Sankaracharya. The temple-enclosure which may once have been the court of a monastery, and then and afterwards the village square and market-place, still contains dharmsalas. It is half inn, and half cathedral close. In inn-yards of this type were played the miracle-plays and moralities of mediæval England. And here, if a party of strolling players came along, or a group of students went out with their magic lantern, it would be in the temple court that the country folk would foregather for their entertainment. Outside, all is of the most primitive. The sanitation is also, sad to say, not very advanced in kind. But the beauty of these mediæval settings is wonderful, and all about the place are the wide fields and those cool winds that go with the rushing stream.

The cloister-like court is still more noticeable at Gupta Kashi, twelve miles further on. Here the temple-court actually adjoins the village-square in which we are housed, and the whole is like something seen in a play. Merchants come, and sadhus clad on ashes, with matted locks, perform strange worships round fires of cow-dung, and the simple life of the pilgrims is lived before one's eyes. We reached Gupta Kashi through some of the most wildly beautiful scenery that the world can contain. There is one long glen which is surely the very crown of the earth's loveliness. At the end, we came out on a

group of shelters called Kund Chatty, and when we had reached our destination we much regretted that we had not insisted on waiting at Kund Chatty till the cool of the day, so hard and arid is the climb, in the fierce noon-sun, between it and Gupta Kashi. If we had done this, however, though we should have had greater physical comfort, we should not have drunk so deep of the middle ages as we did on reaching Gupta Kashi. This village regards its own claims to recognition as resting on the shrine of Vishwanatha, in the temple hard by the dharmsala. This they only profess to have owned since the era of the troubles under Aurangzeb. But the site is, in fact, immensely older. There are two temples in the one court, as so often happens and one is that of Vishwanatha, with images of Narayana outside the door, while the other is to Ardhanari, a very very old and quite pre-Shankaracharyan dedication. The place has underground drainage, covered by flags like Benares and Mauryan Pataliputra.

A very interesting feature of the pilgrim-life, as one sees it in a spot like this, is its leisure and freedom for refined pursuits. Half an hour after arrival, when those whose duty it is to cook have taken up their work, all the others may be seen seated each little party round its own mat or carpet, deep in conversation, or listening to some one whose words are heard with evident respects. It reminds one of the stories told of travellers in the Arabian Nights. These people are, some of them merchants,

some of them pilgrims ; their packages are all bestowed under cover ; their animals are being fed and watered by their appointed servants, and they themselves are ready for their meal, when it shall be announced. Meanwhile they are at no loss. Some one is telling a story, or reading from a book, or they are all absorbed in conversation. Thus for the men. The women are still threading their laborious way, doubtless, from shrine to shrine and salutation to salutation, and have not yet begun to think of comfort. But, this civilisation of the men reminds one, I do not know why, of merchant-civilisations everywhere. It seems to belong to that stratum of evolution, and one's thoughts are driven back on those scholars who say that long before the appearance of royal and military nationalities, the whole of the East was covered, more or less, with a great merchant organisation emanating from the Bharatas, and ramifying over the then known world, a mercantile civilisation, which moreover, laid the foundation of all, that Europe has since gained of culture either moral or intellectual. Can it be that here, in this life, of which, as one sits on the stone window-seat overlooking the square at Gupta Kashi, one catches a glimpse, we have a surviving fragment of the Age of the Caravans? Yonder, in the dharmsala opposite, sit the caravan-chiefs, and the talk they hold amongst themselves is of distant lands and the opportunities of trade, and is yet to build up results, in migrations of faiths and learning and

customs, of which they, talking, little dream. We are back in a distant æon, and the nations of Europe and Asia that are to be born of the tendencies here at work, are still in the future.

The road to Fatta Chatty, the village of the Ruins, which is our next stopping-place, is of surpassing interest. A very short distance out of Gupta Kashi the way divides, for Akhi Math on the one side, and Kedar Nath on the other. Soon after this, we are in the midst of an old religious centre of great importance. On the hill opposite in Akhi Math, the present winter-seat of the Kedar Nath order of Sankaracharya. Here on this side is Nalla Chatty, with a temple which contains ancient Saivite remains, together with relics of the great age in sculpture, Bodhisattvas and the rest. But the great thing is a memorial of some kind, perhaps a Jayastambha or Kirtistambha, as the people themselves suggest, which is evidently a curiously modified Buddhistic stupa. There is also a host of little temples which mark the transition from stupa to temple, and give us the link sought so long in the evolution of the Bengali temple. Most of the site is disused. The little temples have become meaningless to the villagers. There is a great dais or platform on which sacred memorials seem at some far past time to have been crowded, and this reminds us of Kamaleswara at Srinagar, where we have an example of the same kind. But the great feature of the place is an immense unenclosed terrace,

representing the monastery-court or vilage-square, which stands on the face of the hillside looking out over the valley, and having access to an old road from the riverside which the villagers call the Gangarastra. Interesting things, amongst them a stone guddee, are scattered about and around this terrace. It has a swing, too, and doubtless is still used for village-festivities. Ancient life was vastly more coherent and organic than modern, and monastery or temple was the scene, not merely of prayer and meditation, but also of school and play, of bazaar and parliament, of drama and art and hospitality. It is because they are the heirs of all these multifarious functions and activities that the ancient sites have to this day so complex an aspect.

Thus the front of Nalla Temple overhangs the river, while its opposite entrance is on the pilgrim-road. The whole sacred enclosure lies between. The road now winds down into the valley, and it becomes evident from the character of the village-buildings and farm-houses, as we pass, that there has been wealth and splendour, once upon a time, in this unknown place. Another feature of past glory that we notice throughout this particular district is the care of the water. The valleys are rich in springs and streams, and these are very carefully and skilfully engineered for irrigation and then made to debouch at convenient places for bathing and drinking, through old carved spring-heads. When this sign of advanced civilisation ceases, we may believe

that we have passed beyond the influence of an old civic and monastic centre. On our return journey, in a very different part of the Himalayan kingdom, I was able to see the same thing again, at a place called Musaki Nau, between Pauri and Kotdwara. the care and worship of water is always in this country the mark of a deep and splendid civilisation. The worship of rivers has a new meaning for me since I have made the Northern Pilgrimage. I can see now that it has had much to do with the preservation of drinking-water from defilement, and has expressed royal responsibility for checking of infection. Nalla, then may have been an early Buddhistic site. It is not unnatural that monasteries should give place to temples, although the true arrangements is undoubtedly that which we now see at Bodh-Gaya, where the temple stands outside, and the monastery, in a place apart, guards it and cares for it. There is a tendency, when learning grows dim, for monks to build a shrine in their own enclosure and conduct regular services there. This shrine, when the order has disappeared, falls to the care of the Brahmins or secular clergy, who thus acquire a vested interest in its maintenance. Hence we may find a temple where there was once a monastery. In this way we may account for the origin of Kamaleswara in Srinagar, and of Nalla Temple here. But it is not so clear that Gupta Kashi and Agastyamuni were also monastic, though it is not impossible. In these, the temple square has more of the *Place*, or

civic element, and less of the sacerdotal and purely theological.

When we have gone a few miles further and have passed through what seems to have been an old-time city of importance, we come to Bhethu Chatty. Here there are two temples, standing together on the road-side, and an immense cluster on the opposite side. The two on the road itself are the older. One, the older of these again, is to Satya-Narayana. The other is to Birbhadra, or Siva. On the other side of the road, the main temple is to Lakshmi-Narayana, and this adjoins a tank which has no less than seven small temple-like shrines on its sides. Altogether the small shrines dotted about the main temple of Lakshmi-Narayana here are twenty. There is also a curious monument with an inscription, which the people call a *Kirtistambha*. All the temples and shrines are surmounted by *amalakis*. Going back to the temples of Satya-Narayana and Birbhadra, on the other side of the road, we find that there is in this case also a tank with many little shrines about it, down in the valley below, not far from the river. The Lakshmi-Narayana centre evidently imitated all this, at a later age. In three small shrines which are in a row behind Satya-Narayana and Birbhadra, with a large bo tree beside them, I found one old Siva, and in all cases square water-courses. Amongst the small shrines clustered about Lakshmi-Narayana on the opposite side of the road, I found one small chaitya-like building covering a spring. The archi-

tectural form, and the fact that on the lintel of the door is a medallion containing Ganesh, would go to show that this is more ancient than the shrines near it, and perhaps belonged to the Birbhadra centre, before the Vaishnava movement of Ramanuja caused the building of a Lakshmi-Narayana temple here. The chaitya form cannot fail to suggest the Buddhist period. Bhethu Chatty is part and parcel of some chapter in history, which, if it could be unravelled, would tell us much about a series of religious transitions through which the Himalayan peoples have passed, beginning with Buddhism, and ending with Vaishnavism. The centre of which it forms a part may be said to extend from Gupta Kashi on the south, to Bhethu Chatty on the north and even to include Akhi Math on the opposite side of the valley. This whole region has been the theatre of much religious and monastic history.

FATTA CHATTY, where we next passed the night, was only seven miles in all from Gupta Kashi. It was a very lovely place, with large mud and timber-built houses, a stream with a mill-wheel, and one immense deodar. This is perhaps the place to speak of the architectural beauty of the chatties. The room we occupied at Fatta Chatty that night was the most perfectly proportioned chamber I have ever inhabited. It was large and low, with great beams of wood, open verandah-like windows with wide seats, and mud-floor. The social dignity, and something very like splendour, that are expressed

in such a building cannot be described. But Indian people are so accustomed to architectural beauty in domestic buildings that it does not strike them, as it does one of long European associations. The palaces of kings in Europe would be proud to contain rooms as lovely as the rustic halls in these Himalayan villages. At Fatta we had special opportunities also for admiring the care spent on the springs and the fountain-heads.

Our next stopping-place was *Gouri Kund*, ten miles away. On the way, we passed Bhim and Rampur Chatties. We also passed Sone Prayag, a rude and dangerous-looking bridge over a river-confluence. Here last year there was a good modern bridge, but it broke suddenly, under the weight of two hundred pilgrims who were all on it at the same moment. For it is said that never was there seen a year like the last, for the multitude of the pilgrims. On the occassion in question, some forty or fifty were, it seems killed, and another forty or fifty maimed or injured. Many of course escaped hurt altogether. Incredible as it sounds, the bridge has not yet been mended, and pilgrims have still to cross by some sort of makeshift contrivance.

The scenery of this day's stage was very fine. We went through long defiles of mountains, pine, fir and cedar clad. Gouri Kund itself is ancient and squalid. At least one pre-Sankaracharyan Siva may still be traced, and there is a tank in a sacred square. It is here that we find the hot springs that belong

to Kedar Nath. The pavements speak of the age of the village, and though one looks upon them tenderly for this, one is not altogether reconciled thereby to their dirt and slush.

Eight miles further is KEDAR NATH itself. The road, on this final day, is terrible, especially the last four miles of steep ascent. Soon after leaving Gouri Kund a road branches off for Triyugi Narayana, evidently the rival shrine of the Vaishnava period. At the foot of the hills the last chatty we pass is Rambarra, a damp exposed place where it would not be wise to pass the night, and this fact makes the final stage of the journey doubly hard for old or infirm persons. About the beauty of the scenery one could not say enough, but the difficulties of the climb ought not either to be forgotten. It is a dolorous stairway, as hard as life itself, in very truth, as the panda ruefully said to me, "the way to Heaven!" All this is forgotten however when at last we reach the uplands and begin to feel ourselves within measurable distance of Kedar Nath. We are now amongst the wide turf-covered tablelands, and the flowers begin to abound, as in some paradise of Mogul painters. At every step, we pass or are passed by other pilgrims. The eagerness round and about us is indescribable. At last comes the moment when the temple is visible for the first time. A shout goes up from our carriers and others, and many prostrate themselves. We press forward, more rapidly than before. It is even now a mile or so

to the village. But at last we arrive, and entering find that the shrine itself stands at the end of the long avenue-like street, with the mountain and glacier rising sheet behind it, as if all India converged upon Kedar Nath as its northern point, and all roads met at the sacred feet of the Lord of Mountains. Probably, when first the temple was built in this spot, it was actually on the edge of the glacier, which in all these centuries has retreated only to a distance of less than a mile. We had made great efforts to reach our goal on a Monday, for this is held a great benison in visiting a shrine of Siva. But when we arrived, it was the middle of the day, and the temple was closed till the evening *arati*. As the afternoon ended, the cold blue mists came down from the mountains, enwrapping everything ; and one sat out in the village street, watching cowled forms, in their brown kombols, pacing back and forth through the mist before the tight-shut doors. Suddenly we were called to see the *arati*. Darkness had fallen but the mists had gone, and the stars and the snows were clear and bright. Lights were blazing and bells clanging within the temple and we stood without, amongst the watching people. As the lights ceased to swing and the *arati* ended, a shout of rapture went up from the waiting crowd. Then the cry went out to clear the road, and the rush of the pilgrims up the steep steps began. What a sight was this ! On and on, up and up, they came, crowding, breathless, almost struggling, in their mad

anxiety to enter the shrine, reach the image, and at the last, by way of worship, to bend forward and touch with the heart, the sacred point of the mountain! For this half-embrace is what the worship consists of at Kedar Nath. They poured in at the great south door, out by the east. On and on, up and up, one had not dreamt the place contained so many people as now panted forward to obtain entrance. Suddenly, from one of the door-keepers I heard an exclamation of pity, and then he stooped and tenderly lifted a little bent old woman, bowed down under the weight of years, who had lost her footing in the crowd and might have fallen and been trodden under foot. It was one of the sights of a life time, or to stand there, in the black darkness at the top of the steps, and watch the pilgrims streaming in. It seemed as if all India lay stretched before One, and Kedar Nath were its apex, while from all parts everywhere, by every road, one could see the people streaming onward, battling forward climbing their way up all for what?—for nothing else than to touch God!

We had a wonderful walk next day, to the glaciers and the heights, for a while and some of us rested on a hillside, listening to the perpetual muffled boom of the avalanches, as they ceaselessly broke and fell from some part or other of the great ice-mass to the north. "Yes," said the peasant who guided us, thoughtfully, as he stood gazing with us at the glacier. "It looks as if it stood perfectly still.

But really it is moving, like any other river!" The great temple looked small and distant now, like a village-church, and only the towering heights seemed grand enough for the worship of God. We felt this still more when we stood and looked up at the vast snowy expanse that they call the Mahaprasthana, the Great Release. For the Pandava story culminates at Kedar Nath, and we are shown the very road by which Yudhisthira and his brothers and the Lady Draupadi went, on that last great journey by which they reached the end. Others since then have followed them, it is said, and have signed their names, at the last, on a great rock-face that stands on the way. We made our way there, and sure enough we found numbers of trisuls drawn in white and black and red, in wavering lines, some of them, as if by hands that shook with age, and some of them strong and firm, but all, if the country-folk are to be believed, the autographs of those who felt that desire was ended, and the supreme renunciation theirs to make. "For the shastras," say those who know, "make man free of society at two places. Kedar Nath and Allahabad." Surely Allahabad must once have been very beautiful!

The site of Kedar Nath is very old. There is a temple of Satya-Narayana built over a spring, in the village-street. There is also a tiny chapel, containing the nine forms of Devi. There are pre-Sankaracharyan Sivas, also, and square watercourses, dotted about the central shrine. On the whole it

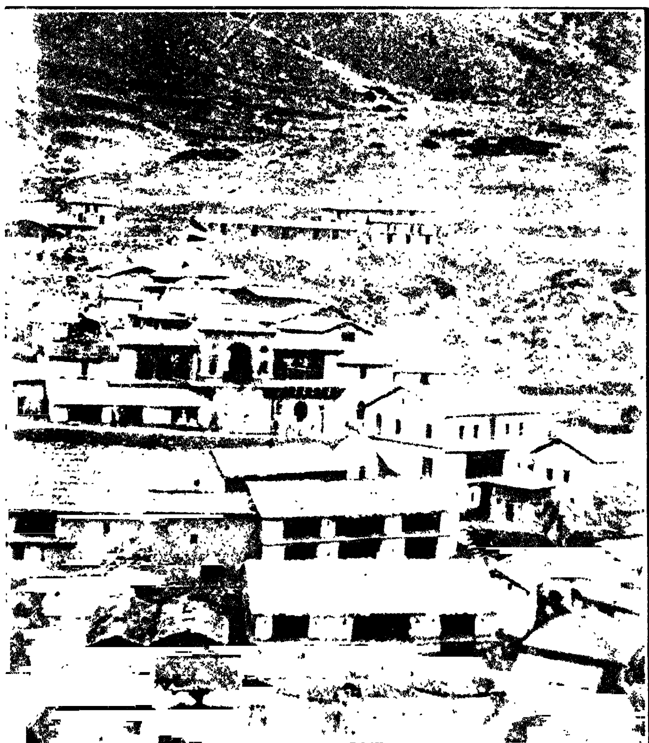
would seem as if, at the period commonly referred to as the visit of Sankaracharya. Satya-Narayana had been superseded by Siva as the principal deity. And the Devi-worship which was probably still older than Satya-Narayana remained henceforth side by side with it, in a similar subordination. This question, of the order in which its pre-Sanakara-charyan phases succeeded one another, is the great crux of the story of Hinduism!

The carving round the doorway of the temple is evidently ancient, and the ornament consists of Hinduistic figures of gods and kings contained in niches, not unlike those which contain Buddhas, in the last of the art-periods at Ajanta. This would pre-dispose us to assign a date between the expulsion from Gandhara 751, and the year 1000 A. D., leaning somewhat to the latter, because of the very manifest decadence in style. We must remember that the importance of Kedar Nath as a place of pilgrimage has always kept it in touch with the Plains, and that at the same time there seems never to have been any Mahammedan invasion of these Himalayan valleys. These facts explain why it is possible to find in this remote spot an important link between older Buddhistic and later Hindu sculpture.

Above all, Kedar Nath is the shrine of the sadhus. As in the days of Buddhism, so in those of Sankaracharya, and as then so also now, the yellow robe gleams and glistens in all directions. There is no begging, for the *sadabratas* supply all the wants of

monastic visitors. But there is a world of enthusiasm, and still the tradition goes amongst them that Kedar Nath is a place of good omen for sannyasis; for here came Sankaracharya and falling into samadhi died!

It was the second day of our stay when an old man who had been seriously ill for many months, reached the place and made his *darsana.* He had ended his journey, and hastened to fulfil his vow within the hour. But scarcely had he done so, barely had he ceased from prayer, not yet was the rapture of achievement abated, when the battle was declared for him to be finished, and in the bright morning air, with long sighing breaths, his soul went forth. Such is the benediction with which the Lord of Mountains lays His hand upon His own!



Badri Narayan

III.

Place.	Distance.	Remarks on accommodation.
Gouri Kund	8 miles	
Fatta Chatty	10 miles	
Ukhi Math	7 miles	Dharmsalas. A large village.
Potibassa	8 miles	
Bunea Kund	2 miles	
Chota Chobda	10½ miles	Dharmsalas.
	[Pilgrimage to Tunganath here]	
Jungal Chatty	4 miles	Chappars.
Mandal Chatty	4 miles	Chappars.
Gopeswara	5 miles	Dharmsalas.
Lall Sanghao or Chamoli	15 miles	Dharmsalas and dâk bungalow.
Pipalkoti	9 miles	Dharmsalas and dâk bungalow.
Garura Ganga	4 miles	
Gulabkoti	9 miles	Dharmsalas and dâk bungalow.
Kumar Chatty	3 miles	
Khanoti Chatty	4 miles	
Joshi Math	9 miles	Dâk bungalows, Dharmsalas.
Vishnu Prayaga	2 miles	
Pandukeswara	12 miles	Dharmsalas, dâk bungalow of Shashadhara.
Hanumana Chatty	4 miles	
Badri Narayana	8 miles	Panda's guest houses and dâk bungalow.

We stopped again, on our return journey, at Gouri Kund and Fatta Chatty. Then we took the road of deep descent into the valley below, and climbing, as cheerfully as we might up the opposite slope, found ourselves at UKHI MATH. From Fatta Chatty to Ukhi Math was about seven miles. It was very impressive to see from a distance a small square terrace below the monastery, and on it some ten or twelve small shrine-like monuments grouped together, near a great bo-tree. These temple-like erections reminded the eye of he shrines at Nalla, and seemed a striking confirmation of the idea that Ukhi Math had only been the last of a series of sites chosen for the winter-monastery of the monks in charge of Kedar Nath. These, however, though so like them, were not shrines, but samadhis of long dead and gone mahunts, or, as they are called in the Himalayas, Raouls. They were obviously later in style than the shrines on the other side of the valley, though they differed much amongst themselves in form. On the same terrace was the old and very beautiful bathing-tank of the monastery. About it and in its little niches were lovely fragments of old carvings. And the view from under the shade of the bo-tree was a superb vision of a semicircle of snows, with a receding vista of interlacing green and purple vales leading up to them. This long ascending avenue makes the snows look as vast here in the forenoon, as at Kedar Nath in the evening. Such a view would be impossible on the other side of the

valley, and would almost explain why Sankaracharya should have placed his math here. A little higher on the hill, in the midst of a village huddled together in terraces, stands the monastery itself. We cannot help thinking that the whole place must be like a fragment of Lhassa.

The math is a large square building, with an immense and most imposing door, over which is a painted modern cornice, in black and red, of elephants. Within, there is a bazaar and what is almost a whole village, with a large temple in the centre. This temple, however, is still not so sacrosanct as the small ancient chapel, contained in the verandah-like 'pujar-dalan' at the side. Here is the reason asserted for the site of the math, in an old altar, to the Mother, said to have been established by Ukha the daughter of Ban Asur. This Ban Asur is a person of whom we constantly hear in this neighbourhood. Who was he? There is a village called by his name, and Gopal Panda assures us that he has left there some remains of fortification. One thinks of the proud Assurs of Assyria—Asur Bani-Pal, and Asur Nuzir-Pal,—as one has seen them in the British Museum, and wonders if traces of some remote invasion by men of the same race are here remembered. Mandhata Rajah is also quoted but somewhat vaguely, in connection with the age of the holy site. The carvings in the verandah are mainly Ganeshes, griffins (almost like our unicorns) and dwarapalas. There are a couple of pieces of carving belonging to

Vaishnavism, built into the wall on right and left of a door on the far side of the courtyard. These are very fine indeed. They are much later than the others, but then there is an idea—that Krishna and the Gopis—behind them, which is enough to account for their artistic superiority.

Ukhi Math was originally granted to the order, subject to military service to the old kings of Garhwal, of the same line as the present family, and very fine reading are the copies of deed which have been made from time to time. The present Raoul is said to be the one hundred and twenty-fifth in the succession. Allowing ten years to each reign, which could hardly be too much, this gives us twelve hundred and fifty years of existence, taking us back to something like the middle of the seventh century, for the beginning of the dynasty. It cannot be held impossible that Ukhi Math has been the seat of the order throughout this period. The site is evidently prehistoric. The temple in the middle of the courtyard is built on ancient foundations, and its lowest tiers are still old, though the upper parts are much restored. Again, the cornice of elephants over the door, though not very old, since it is made of wood, would seem to be old in pattern, and even to form a link with Buddhism. Buddha, the spiritual hero, was always symbolised by the elephant, and the fact that this particular cornice reappears above the doors of other ancient Himalayan monasteries also, seems significant in the highest degree of a continuous link in

tradition with the remote past. The one thing that is half-modern—being only late mediæval—at Ukhi Math, is the little group of samadhis. These are in some cases rude in structure, but even when elaborate, they are surmounted only by half an amaloki, or by a spiral bud or other purely arbitrary finial ornament. It is only fair to add that the neighbouring tank is fine, and probably older in style than they. This being so, we may perhaps accept Ukhi Math as really an ancient establishment, and regard the group of samadhis as due to some outbreak of an erratic fashion, many centuries later.

The little terrace is occupied now by a modern hospital, and the doctor and his patients enjoy the repose and shade that were first designed to begin and end the day of pious meditation. The mind can still see the old time monks pacing up and down them telling their beads or seated, lost in thought at dawn.

This part of our journey will always be memorable to us, for the fact that our gentle panda here fell in with a sadhu, in whom was the very bone and meat of all Vedanta. Lost in their argument, the two old men trudged along, with heads close together, pursuing some vigorous train of thought. The Sadhu was of a somewhat austere cast, and excitement was not upon him. His voice grew louder and louder, rising to a perfect shout, and with each increment of intensity we could see our panda's smile broadening and his head nodding still more rapidly. Suddenly the conclusion of the whole matter was arrived at.

They sprang, with a simultaneous impulse, to opposite sides of the road, and there stood nodding and sawing the air at each other, while the latter Sadhu, with the emphasis of repetition, continued to vociferate the point of their mutual delight. This quaint spectacle compensated us for much that we might otherwise have felt as sad oblivion, on the part of our own companion and guide!

From Ukhi Math it is eight miles to Potibasa; then two miles to Bunea Kund; and still half a mile further to Chota Chobda, another village resting-place. Of all the Chatties I have ever seen, Chota Chobda is the most beautifully placed. The whole series of these places is at the summit of the pass, looking out on a great range of snows which includes Kedar Nath and Badri Narayan as sister-peaks, and also Gangotri and Jamnotri. But Potibasa and Bunea Kund, though high, are in pockets of the pass. Only Chota Chobda is frankly on the open hillside. Here we pass the last of the carpenters' sheds where we might buy wooden bowls, one of the small specialities of the pilgrimage. Under foot, we have short close turf, absolutely starred in all directions with anemones, blue and white, like English daisies. It is cold and bracing and while we were there, indeed, we had a severe snowstorm. We quitted the height reluctantly enough next morning, and proceeded on the long descent through thick forests, that brought us to Jungal Chatty, four miles off, and finally to Mandal Chatty eight miles from Chobda, at the very bottom

of the hill. It is at Chobda that the pilgrims leave for Tunganath, such of them as desire to do this extra climb. The beauty of Tunganath is that all the snows can be seen from there, even better than from Chobda. Nor is the journey, it is said, so hard as one would suppose. The Maharajah of Gwalior has made it easy, by cutting paths and mending roads. The Tunganath pilgrims return to the main road again at a dismal place called Bhingoda Chatty where one actually sees the staircase in the mountain by which they have descended.

We were doing double marches in these days, owing to the illness of one of our party, that we might reach a place called Lall Sanghao or Chamoli, where we should be on the Thibetan Road, and enjoy the resources of a dak bungalow. Thus even on reaching Mandal Chatty, we were still some eight miles away from our destination.

It was at the end of the pass, when still about a mile and a half from Chamoli that we came to Gopeswara, a place which is almost a town in size, and forms a pilgrimage on its own account. There is a large temple here to the Mother, but Gopeswara is really Siva, as the Lord of the Cows. The story told of its foundation is the familiar one of the cow that was followed to the jungle and found to be pouring her milk over a natural Siva in the rock. Taking this as the altar, says the story, the temple was built over it. In plain fact, we have here a court like that of Bhethu Chatty, on which open the

quarters of the Mahunt or Raoul by means of a door, surmounted by the familiar frieze of elephants in red and black. The quadrangle gives access to the temple proper, with all the shrines and memorials that have grown up round it. The place is of unexampled wealth in Sivas of pre-Sankaracharyan type,—cube, octagon, and thimble-shaped top—and even contains two at least of the older four-headed form, with one later specimen, covered with what I take to be the feet of the Lord, but said by the country people to be a crore of heads. There was a small chaitya-shaped shrine containing one of the four-headed Sivas, under a tree. This was the shrine of Anasuya Devi, the goddess who unveiled herself before the child who was Brahma-Vishnu-Siva, to give alms. There is history in this little story, could we observingly distil it out! The old Raoul says with pride that this temple has been here 'since the days of Rama.' One of the most remarkable things about the place is a trisul of victory made of ancient swords, with an inscription. Lower down on the hillside, as we came along, we had seen another temple, with small shrines near it. We were not able to go and explore, but it would not be surprising to find that this was a Vaishnava centre of the mediaeval period. Gopeswara is the cathedral city of a small independent diocese. Two miles further we came down into the gorge of the Alakananda, and found ourselves in the Canyon-like scenery of the Thibetan Road.

From this point on, the hills about us were almost

naked, except of scanty pines, and only played upon by green and purple lights and shadows. Nine miles from Chamoli by an easy march through desolate scenery, is Pipalkoti. Here there is a charmingly situated amloki-crowned temple in a gorge and in the town itself, an old market-square. In a rude little shrine near the dak bungalow, surmounted by a pre-Sankaracharyan Siva, are some bits of old carving, with old Narayanas and Devis. The view is marvellous. Golden, green, rice terraces fall away from our feet ; then suddenly comes a gap, where the slope dips into the ravine below us ; and then steep sombre cliffs and crags rise abruptly beyond, and the whole valley is closed in, in front of us, by this curving line of sharp purple peaks. These lines of steeps and scarps are wild and grand like the scenery of the north coast of Ireland or the west of Scotland, and one can hardly believe that the white sea-gulls are not nesting there, above the scanty pines. We are at a height of four and a half thousand feet.

About nine miles further is Gulabkoti, passing Garura Ganga half way. To worship at Garura Ganga is supposed to be sovereign against snake-bite for the following year. Here we suddenly come upon the sight of the snows again. There is a handsome temple at Gulabkoti, to Lakshmi-Narayana. The landscape grows more and more austere and fine. We go through narrow gorges with cliffs of purple shadows and green blushes. It is on this up-journey

that we see best the beauty of colour, though the down-journey, bringing us to exposed places when they are in shadow, is in many respects easier to make.

Two or three miles beyond Gulabkoti is Kumar Chatty, in a pocket of the mountain. Khanoti Chatty is much better placed. It is about ten miles in all, to Joshi Math, the winter-quarters of the Badri Narayan Raoul and his staff. The main temple is now Vaishnava though it is easy to see that the whole place has once been Saivite. The bazaar is quaint and interesting. Beside the temple there is a roofed spring, and opposite, the entrance to the monastery. A second square, on the other side of the math, contains an old Siva-temple with its bull before it. The main temple of Joshi Math is significant. It is built on a strong terrace of masonry, which supports a series of seven shrines as buttresses. The dedications of these shrines are supremely interesting. One of them, which is chaitya-shaped in form, in full working order, and evidently important, is to the Nine forms of the Mother—rather incongruous, were it not for the explanations of history, in a professedly Vaishnavite temple! There is also one which contains, as a member of our party tells me, an extraordinarily beautiful Parbatty and Mahadeva. There is also a shrine to Ganesha! ! ! We constantly find in these mountain-temples, that even when making changes and restorations fragments of old-building have been used for ornament. In this way, here we

find the lintel of the main temple carved with doors of viharacells, surmounted by three horse-shoe patterns evidently representative of ornate chaityas.

The next day, passing Vishnu Prayaga at the bottom of the Joshi Math valley, we came after six miles march, to Pandukeswara. Vishnu Prayaga is a tiny temple perched on a rock above a boiling confluence. The Alakananda and the Vishnu-Ganga meet here in a whirlpool, and the great rapids of the Alakananda, just above, throw up a perpetual vapour, which is really fine spray. The Gohonna flood entered the valleys we know, somewhat above this point, so Pandukeswar is the only village on our line of march that escaped it. And this has not been well for Pandukeswara! The population too is Bhutiya, which cannot be said to improve the cleanliness of the place. Here there are two temples, standing side by side. Both have succumbed to mediæva' Vaishnavism, so it is now impossible to say what were their original dedications, though it is evident enough that the site was saivite. One of the temples is slightly peculiar in form. The tower is a cylinde on a cube, with flying gargoyles at the corners. The other is of the usual form, and less old. The place is famous for five copper-plate grants, of which fou remain. They were deciphered by Rajendra Lala Mitra, and refer to obscure grants of land. They are most beautiful in appearance, especially one, which bears a bull as its seal.

The next day brings us, with a twelve miles

march, to Badri Narayana itself. About six miles away there is a chatty called Hanuman Chatty, guarding the pass. The road is beautiful, but also a little difficult, though not to be compared in this respect with that to Kedar Nath. Badri Narayan itself is said to have been established by Shankaracharya, who placed it where it is, because of the neighbourhood of the hot springs in the tank close by. In this it differs from Kedar Nath, which holds by the tradition that it was already established, and Shankaracharya only made it famous, a distinction which in all probability is perfectly true. The architecture of the temple is painfully modern, having undergone repair, without regard to history, and the gateways and walls are late Mogul in style. But owing to this very modernness, the worship is better organised, the pandas may not enter the temple with their clients, and the whole space is reserved for devotion pure and simple. In the course of ages, vested rights have grown up at the Saivite centre, and the conduct of the pandas within the temple is irritating in the extreme. As befits a shrine of the Mahammedan period, this Vaishnava temple is even more exclusive than Kedar Nath. But one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen was the walk round it of the pilgrims, telling their beads, in the early morning. They seemed to be lost in a dream of peace and prayer. It is significant of the mediæval form of Vaishnavism to which it belongs—the same as that of Tulsidas Ramayana—that Ghanta-Karna is

the Kotwal of this shrine. Ghanta-Karna, the Man who would not hear the name of Vishnu, belongs to the time of Hari-Hara, and is a purely theological myth of the first order. An older Vaishnavism would have had integral images of Garura and Hanumana. There is a Garura out in the courtyard, but he has evidently been an after-thought. The real guardian is Ghanta-Karna, Kotwal of synthesis.

The turf and flowers of Badri are if possible still more beautiful than what we have already seen. Not so varied nor yet so alpine, for the height is not so great as Kedar Nath. But the turf is short and thick and close, and falls away in terraces with rounded edges, which are strewn with grey boulders of a wonderful weather-tint. Oh the grey of the stones of Badri Narayan! Never have I seen anything else like this, and here and there they were purple, with long fragrant trails of wild thyme. There were pink and white briar-roses close to us, and our garlands of welcome were made of many-tinted violet primulas. Four miles from Badri there is a fine waterfall called Basudhara, which all who are young enough ought to see. For us, however, being old, Badri itself, with its glaciers and snows, its velvet terraces and its silver moonlight, was enough. Our only regret was the shortness of our three days' stay.

IV.

RETURN :

Place.	Distance.	Accommodation.
Badri Narayan to Chamoli or Lall Sanghao	32 miles	4 days.
Kuvera Chatty	2 miles	
Nanda Prayag	7 miles	Town, with Dharmsalas.
Sounla	3 miles	Dak bungalow and Chatties.
Karna Prayag	13 miles	Town : Dak bungalow; and Dharmsalas.

Here roads divide : ordinary pilgrim route leads to RANI NUGGUR, near Kathgodam, *via* Adh-Badri and Mehal Chauri, where the coolies are changed. About days' journey. Alternative route for return, by Srinagar, thence leaving for Hardwar or Kotdwara. If Kotdwara be chosen, the traveller proceeds from Karna Prayag as follows :—

Nagrasso	10 miles	A Dak bungalow only.
Rudra Prayag	10 miles	Town : dak bungalow and Dharmsalas.
Chhantikhal	10 miles	Dak bungalow.
Baltisera	1½ miles	Chhappars.
Srinagar	8 miles	City.
Pauri	8 miles	Town.
Adoani	10 miles	Dak bungalow and small village.
Kaleth	10 miles	Dak bungalow only, and no water.
Banghat	2 miles	Dak bungalow and Dharmsalas.

Place.	Distance.	Accommodation.
Dwarikal	7 miles	Dak bungalow and village.
Daramundi	6½ miles	Dak bungalow and village.
Dagoda	5 miles	Dak bungalow and village.
KOTDWARA	10 miles	Railway to Najibabad.

NANDA PRAYAG is a place that ought to be famous for its beauty and order. For a mile or two before reaching it, we had noticed the superior character of the agriculture, and even some careful gardening of fruits and vegetables. The peasantry also, suddenly grew handsome, not unlike the Kashmiris! The town itself is new, rebuilt since the Gohonna flood, and its temple stands far out across the fields, on the shore of the *Prayag*. But in this short time, a wonderful energy has been at work, on architectural carvings, and the little place is full of gem-like beauties. Its temple is dedicated to Naga Takshaka and as the road crosses the river, I noticed two or three old Pathan tombs, absolutely the only trace of Mhammedanism that we had seen, north of Srinagar.

All this part of the road is embowered in pine-forests. But never did we see anything more beautiful than GOUNLA DAK BUNGALOW. In the midst of springs and streams and pines, it would have been a joy to have lived there for months. KARNA PRAYAG, where the return-routes divide, we reached by moonlight. It was a wonderful combination of rocks, pines, and bo-trees. There is an old temple here, restored since the flood, which is a perfect little

museum of beautiful statues. The people call some fragments by the name of Karna, which we felt sure, from the gravity and nobility of the faces, must have been Buddhas or Bodhisattvas.

We passed many interesting temples on the road next morning,—though none so imposing as that of Karna,—and one in especial, to Chandika Devi, at the village of Punnai. This was two-fold, a square rath-like cell, side by side and distinct from the more modern and ordinary tapering obelisk-shrine with the rectangular chamber attached to it in front. The village of this part was excellent, and on a height above, a magnificent stretch of grazing-land had been bought by a merchant, and given in perpetuity to the people, who call it their Gocharra Sorgama. This, enabling them to keep numerous oxen, may account for the fine ploughing.

Ten miles from Karna Prayag, we reached *Nagrasoo* Dak Bungalow. This was a lonely place, and inconvenient in many ways. But a bazar was under construction. Late in the afternoon two hungry and belated pilgrims arrived, and made their meal ready under a tree close by.

Still another ten miles, and we reached RUDRA-PRAYAG once more, with its incomparable rocks. Henceforth, down to Srinagar, where we must change our coolies, the road would be familiar. We should meet with no surprises.

In choosing to return by Pauri to Kotdwara, from Srinagar, we were influenced by the fact that

the road lies nigh, and that there were dak bungalows. Pauri, about 8000 ft. high, is the official station, instead of Srinagar, and is most pleasantly situated, as regards climate. Our luggage was carried up to that point by coolies, but there we were able to transfer it to mules, for those who have permits for the dak bungalows, nothing could be more pleasant than this road to Kotdwara, and we passed small parties of pilgrims from time to time, who were using it. But it is a long and lonely road, sparsely populated, and for those who may not avail themselves of the bungalows, there must be only scanty accommodation. Kaleth, owing to want of water, is utterly unpracticable for a night's stay ; and Banghat, in the valley of the Vyasagunga (or Pindar?) is low-lying and malarious, none but boiled water should be drunk there. Dwarikal is on the summit of a mountain pass, and Daramundi and Dagoda, though of wonderful beauty, are low and warm. Kotdwara is the terminus of a narrow gauge railway, by which we reach the E. I. R. at Najibabad.

The historic route for the return of the pilgrims used to be that from Adh Badri and Mehal Chauri to Kathgodam. That road has now been absorbed for military purposes, and a new pilgrim-route opened, which ends at Ram Naggar, a station from which Moradabad is easily reached. This new road is splendidly made, but it is still low and unassimilated. The chatties are small, and few and far between. Water is difficult to get. Food is scarce

and dear. And the accommodation is very insufficient. Doubtless each year that passes will tend to rectify this state of things. More *bunneas* will settle along it, and its facilities will be improved. In the mean time, the pilgrim's road is one of austerity, and he is sustained in the toils requisite to reach his distant home, by the thought of how welcome and sweet it will be to rest.

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NORTHERN • TIRTHA.

A Brief Summary of the Sequence of Hinduism as seen in the Himawant.

Buddhism and pre-historic Hinduism, largely planetary, worship of Daksha, Ganesha, Garura, Narasinha, &c.

Hindu Siva—in succession to Brahma—the four-headed Sivas at Gopeswara, the four-headed Dharmachakra at Agastya-muni and at Joshi Math.

Era of Devi-worship—Synthetising itself to Siva, with Ganesha as son. Nine forms of Devi, Kedar Nath Joshi Math, Siva and Parbatty. Latter, Siva becomes Arddhanari and the Siva in three stages as at Gupta Kashi, also Gopeswara, also Devi Dhura, above Kathgodam, also Kamaleswar in Srinagar.

Possible Era of the Ramayana—Dronprayag and all places named on behalf of Rama, &c.

Era of the Mahabharata, bringing in worship of Satya Narayan. Traces numerous, Vyasagunga to Kedar Nath, &c.

Esp. Temple of five Pandavas, before entering Srinagar.

Sankaracharyan Siva-worship. Bilwakedar, Kedar Nath, Bhethu Chatty.

Mediæval Vaishnavism. Srinagar, Gupta Kashi, Bhethu Chatty, Kedar Nath, and the valleys of Badri Narayan.

Siva again substituted for Narayana at Gupta Kashi under pressure of some special circumstances. •

It must be understood that each of these phases is liable to develop itself continuously, from its inception, so that none of the succeeding eras stands alone. At each place named, it may be only a trace that is left of any given era. It must not be expected that the site shall be eloquent of it.

Kedar Nath and Badri Narayan are thus to be regarded as the cathedral cities of adjacent dioceses. Each has its four dependent centres, and the still smaller diocese of Gopeswar has also its minor sites of religious importance. On the road to Gangotri, there is an old religious capital called Barahat ; and Adh Badri must not be forgotten—on the road to Kathgodam. By all, the visit of Sankaracharya,—sometime between 600 and 800 A.D.,—is claimed as if it had been a recent event, vividly remembered, and this would tend, other things being conformable, to show that these sites were already old, at the time of his coming. We can hardly doubt that this was so. It is evident enough that in his name,—whether he was in fact the Malabari Sankaracharya who wrote the Commentaries, or, as a recent writer, Rajendra Lal Ghose, would have us believe, a Bengali scholar who formed the power behind Shashanka, the anti-Buddhistic king—a strong wave of Saivaism swept up all the valleys of the Himalayas. It was this wave, the work of this gigantic epoch-making mind, that finally purged the *saivite* idea of all its pre-historic, physical elements, and fastened upon Siva the subtle poetic conception of the great monk, throned on the snows and lost in one eternal meditation. Every thing in Hindu imagery of Mahadev that conflicts with this notion, is pre-Sankaracharyan.

Even in this, however, it must be remembered that Sankaracharya is rather the end of a process than an individual. In the *Kumar Sambhab*, the Birth of

the War Lord, of Kalidas, we see the same Aryanising process at work on the congeries of elements that even then were seething and fuming about the feet of one who would fain cast himself upon the occean of the thought of God as Siva. A people that had learnt under Buddhism to worship the solitary life of spiritual culture, a people whose every instinct made for the sanctity of the home, and the purity of the family, found themselves on the one hand enrapt by the conception of God as the Great Monk, and on the other puzzled by the presence of Parbatty, with a train of alien associations. The riddle was solved by the genius of Kalidas. In the *Kumar Sambhab* he vindicated triumphantly the Indian ideal of woman and marriage. In Uma, we have a vision of life and love in which the Aryan imagination can rest, without tremor or misgiving. The last remnant of early Bacchus-ideals is banished, however, by the stern fiat of Sankaracharya. Even the popular imagination is called into leash. The Great God is established finally, as the light of knowledge within the soul, Purusha the stirless, the Destroyer of Ignorance. The great prayer to Rudraa,—

From the Unreal, lead us to the Real!
From Darkness, lead us into Light!
From Death, lead us to Immortality!
Reach us through and through ourself
And evermore protect us Oh Thou Terrible!—
from ignorance,
By Thy Sweet Compassionate Face!

might well have been the utterance of Sankaracharya, in the hour of placing the keystone in the arch of the national conception.

The emblem of Siva which was established by the teacher for worship, in supersession of all others, would seem to have been the hump or heap of natural rock, as we find it at Kedar Nath, at the Kedar Nath monastery in Benares, at Bilwakedar, and elsewhere. I found it a few weeks ago, in a temple on the Ganges bank above Dakshineswara. The emblem that had been in use before his time was undoubtedly that in three stages, cube, octagonal cylinder and thimble-shaped top, the form which was universal in the time of Varaha Mihira, 550 A.D.

But this Siva was too intimately associated with the image of Arddhanari, even as we find it at Gupta Kashi, to be tolerable to the fastidious mind of Sankaracharya. He would have no Siva in the midst of his Saktis,—the interpretation which had now transformed the four-headed Brahma into the Tantrik Mahadev, as at Gopeswara, and at Chandra Nath near Chittagong.

Nor would he have a form even remotely capable of a phallic rendering. To this fiery monastic intelligence, such a significance was in itself degradation, and he could not away with it. Back, then, to the ancient sanctity of the mound, back to the purity and simplicity of nature! By a curious irony of history, the violent enemy of Buddhist Tantrik abuses became the restorer of the Buddhist Stupa to

worship! The taste of the whole people endorsed his criticism, and even as they seem to have accepted his repudiation of human sacrifice, in the cause of mother-worship, at Srinagar, so at each sacred site, they set up the Great God for supreme veneration, and where this deity was new, they established Him in His Sankaracharyan form. At Gupta Kashi, whatever its name then was, Siva was already worshipped as Arddhanari, and no change was made, though we cannot doubt that the spiritual impact of the new thought was adequately realised. But at Kedar Nath itself, and at Bhethu Chatty, where Satya-Narayan, or Vishnu was the chief deity, Siva, in His new form, was substituted.

The same tide of the Sankaracharyan energy swept also over the valleys leading up to Badri Narayan, and Joshi Math and Pipalkoti still remain, to testify to the pre-Ramanuja Saivaism of these parts. But at Joshi Math there are traces in abundance of a world still older than that of Sankaracharya. Its theological name—Dhyani Badri—suggests to the ear that *Badri* is a corruption of *Buddha*, and opens up a long vista of antiquity.* Whether this be so or not, its position on the Tibetan road has exposed it to a whole series of influences, from which the more secluded valleys of Kedar Nath have been protected. By comparing the two, we may perhaps succeed in computing the number and importance of the Mongolian elements that have entered into the great synthesis called Hinduism.

The true place of Badri Narayan in history may perhaps be better understood when it is mentioned that it was long a pilgrimage of obligation to the Tibetan Lamas, and that even now certain Tibetan monasteries pay it tribute. It is for them, in fact, the first of that chain of sacred places that ends, for the Buddhistic nations, with Gaya. Seen from this point of view the importance of Badri Narayan as a place of *Srāddha* acquires a new significance. It is the holiest of all. The requiem that has been said here, may be repeated nowhere else. The dead whose repose has here been prayed for, reach final peace. It will, I think, be found that that there is no special place of *Srāddha* in India, which is not either a place of Buddhistic pilgrimage, or else, like Deva Prayag, an important point on the Tibetan road. And while the habit of prayer for and benediction of the dead is one to which the human heart everywhere must respond, there is not an equal universality, perhaps, in the mode of thought that regards as somehow spoilt and exhausted, the rice, furnishings, and money that are dedicated as oblations to the departed. There is in this an element curiously incongruous with our modern, Indo-European modes of feeling, though it has much that is kindred to it, in ancient Egyptian, and in the Chinese faith. Yet the poetry of the prayer that can be perfected only on the sunlit heights of Badri Narayan, none will, I think, gainsay. Here sorrow ends in peace. Here the dead parent and the living child are uplifted together in a common

soothing. And the Love of God throbs out, like a lighted lamp within the shrine, across that temple-court, where the women perform *pradakshina*, telling their beads, and lost in the dream beyond life and death alike.

The mediæval Vaishnavism that began with Ramanuja and dominated the whole life of India in so many ways, during the middle ages, captured Badri Narayan and its subject seats. But at Kedar Nath, it only succeeded in establishing the minor pilgrimage of Triyugi Narayan in the immediate neighbourhood. The name of this shrine marks the same eager ambition that we saw in the legend of Narada, at the temple of the five Pandavas in Srinagar, to claim for itself continuity with an older pre-Sankaracharyan orthodox authentic Hinduism. This was the same Vaishnavism that blossomed later into the Ramayana of Tulsidas. It was the same that found expression in Guru Nanak in the Punjab, in Tukaram in Maharashtra, and even—though in such different form!—in Chaitanya in Bengal. Even in the life of Ramanuja, in Chaitanya, in Guru Nanak, and in Tukaram, it is pre-eminently an uprising of the people. Even in Meera Bai in Rajputana, it represents opportunity for women and in the Himalayas at least it found expression in a new order of architecture, seen in perfection at Bhethu Chatty—the tall lily-like tower crowned with the *amalaki*, which is slightly more modern than the great temple of Bhubaneswara in Orissa, even as that represents a

later phase of the Bodh-Gaya type. One of the most interesting problems of Indian history lies in the question why a movement that was marked by so many common features throughout the rest of India, should have assumed so distinctive a character in Bengal. Vaishnavism, as a whole, is a subject that calls for careful and extensive study. Its history will be found to be twisted out of many strands, and it will often happen that some slight disagreement on a point of doctrine or symbolism indicates a difference of ages and of provinces in origin. Going back to the period before the Saivaism of Sankaracharya and before even the Satya-Narayan that that superseded, what do we find, of an older Hinduism still? There can be no doubt that the Ramachandra of Deva-Prayag is older. Here Ramachandra would seem to have been established before the time of the Guptas (319 A.D. onwards) when Siva was the chief deity of Hinduism. Just as in the Ramayana itself, so also here at Deva Prayag the one statement made and emphasised is that Rama the Incarnation of Vishnu, *is* Siva. That is to say, the Godhead of Siva, when this site was dedicated, was nowhere in dispute. It was not a point that called for argument. We cannot help wondering if there was not an early attempt to *Ramayanise* the whole Himawant, so to say. Lakshman-Jhula and Dronghat met us at the very outset of our journey. And it is certain that "the days of Rama" seem antiquity itself to the people,

and that every village not otherwise named is Rampur or Rambarra, or Ramnagar.

Whether this was so or not, it is fairly certain that in the age when a knowledge of the Mahabharat represented ideal culture, a great and authoritative effort was made, to associate this whole region with the Pandavas. That the attempt was undertaken, with an eye to the work as literature, and not on the basis of ancient, pre-historic traditions, is shown by the little chapel dedicated to Vyasa, in the valley of Vyasagunga. Here the pilgrim about to follow up the stations of the Mahabharata could first make salutation to the master-poet. Of all the elements contained in this particular stratum of tradition, the personality of Bhima—or, as the people call him, 'Bhim Sen'—the strong man of Hinduism, stands out as most pre-historic. There is here something unique, something that has a sanction of its own, in the popular mind, not derived from its place in the national epic. "Bhima," as a member of our own party exclaimed, "is undoubtedly the genuine article!"

If there really was a prior movement for connecting Himawant with the ideas of the Ramayana, succeeded by the Mahabharata-epoch,—bringing in the worship of Satya-Narayan—then before either of these came the great era of Devi. There is a chapel of the nine forms of Devi still, at Kedar Nath, and the oldest and most active of the seven minor temples at Joshi Math contains the same images. In order

really to understand this idea, it would be necessary to make a separate and complete study of it, as it is found in all the different parts of India. But in the meantime, it is fairly certain that in its most elaborate form, it made its advent into these mountains before the era of Satya-Narayan, and it is worth while also to note the relationship of its great centres to the Tibetan road. Two of these are Gopeswara near Chamdi and Devi Dhura above Kathgodam.

The impulse of Devi-worship seems to have been synthetising. It attached itself to that cult of Siva which was already accepted and carrying with it the pre-historic Ganesha, established a holy family. No one who has heard the tale of the headless Ganesha, below Kedar Nath, can fail to recognise the fact that this god had already had a history, before being established as the son of Siva and Parbatty. The frequency of his images is one of the surest marks of age, in a Siva-shrine, and his medallion over the door of the chaitya-shaped building that covers the spring at Bhethu Chatty, marks out that structure, as surely as its Buddhistic form, as the oldest of the buildings in the neighbourhood.

Before any of these developments, came the Buddhistic missionaries, who, from the time of the great Nirvana, carried the Gospel to the Himawanta. Of this phase of history, little or no trace remains, save in the chaitya-form of the shrine of the Mother at Gopeswara, the spring-cover at Bhethu Chatty, and the temple of the nine forms of Devi at Joshi Math,

and in the fact that at Nalla we seemed to see the development of the temple out of the stupa. Whether, besides this, the very word 'Badri'—with its 'Dhyani Badri' as the esoteric name of Joshi Math —is also a trace of Buddhism must be decided by others. One thing is clear. All the Buddhistic texts and deeds that are written on birch bark come from the Himalayas, and as these are many, the Himalayas must have been the scene of great life and activity during the Buddhistic period.

The whole region of the pilgrimage forms a *cul-de-sac* of Hinduism—even better than that of Orissa,—in which one may study the birth and origin of manifold things that have gone to form the great synthesis of the national faith. The sensitiveness that certain sites have shown to the whole historic sequence of religious developments, marks their early establishment as Buddhistic centres. And in every case we find the characteristic that distinguishes the Hindu temple still, the tendency to gather round the central theme or shrine an account of the religion as it stands at the moment. The tendency to crowd on a single site, temple, stupa, sacred tree, school, monastery and dharmsala is one that may be seen in Buddhist countries still, throwing a flood of light on the genesis of such places as Agastyamuni, Kamaleswar, Nalla, and Gopeswar.

The northern Tirtha forms a great palimpsest of the history of Hinduism. Record has here been written upon record. Wave has succeeded wave.

And still the bond that knits these farthest points north, to the farthest south, is living and unbroken, and the people stream along the pilgrim roads, in worship, to testify to the fact that without the conception of India as a whole we can explain no single part or item of the Indian life. But the greatest of all synthesis is that which is written in the minds and hearts of the simple Himalayan peasantry themselves. Successive waves of sectarian enthusiasm have made their country what it is but the people themselves are no sectaries. To them, Siva, Devi, and Narayan are all sacred, and in their grasp of the higher philosophy of Hinduism, they are, without exception, true Hindus.

जय केदारनाथ स्वामी की जय !
जय बदरी विशाल की जय !

KEDAR NATH AND BADRI NARAYAN.

If any man doubts that Hinduism is the romance of India let him make pilgrimage to the Himalayas and judge for himself. The famous shrines of Kedar Nath and Badri Narayan are like the cathedral cities of two remote northern diocese upon which has broken for the last two thousand years the tidal wave of every great spiritual movement in Indian history. Usually a little late. For the Himalayas have not been central. They have been receptive, not creative. The forces that have overswept them have all originated elsewhere. But sooner or later they have arrived. Sooner or later they have made their impress. Till to-day, anyone who has thoroughly studied the country between Hardwar, Kedar Nath, Badri Narayan and Kathgodam, cannot fail to know the story of his nations past, at least in so far as that of her thought can make it clear.

For while religion and philosophy are not the whole of the national life of India, they are undoubtedly the key to that life. Hinduism gives a continuous precipitate as it were, from Indian history. It is a stratified deposit, and each period of advancing thought has made its own contribution to the series. The two last and most important are represented by the Saivism of Kedar Nath and the Vaishnavism of Badri Narayan. But these are not the most ancient

forms of those ideas. The Saivism of Kedar Nath quite rightly describes itself as Sankaracharayan, and the Vaishnavism of Badri claims with perfect truth the name of Ramanuja. Neither is primitive. Neither has been accidental. Each in its turn has been a great emotional revival, calling men to return to the memory of an older and purer faith than they saw about them. Sankaracharya, or his movement, took the Himalayas by storm. Traces of the older systems that had preceded him, remain, it is true, to this day, but we cannot doubt that at a given period the whole region was dominated by his influence, and by the school that he founded. Badri itself was Saivite then. Even now there remain within the circle of its authority many relics and traces of the age when Mahadev was as much the centre of worship here as in the sister-diocese.

Each of the two great shrines is built in a glacial valley, and smaller preparatory sanctuaries occur along the roads that lead up to them. A line of Sivas, a line of Narayans, lead to Kedar and Badri. Again, each can only be served by monks in residence for six months in every year. Hence there is in each case a winter-monastery at a distance of some score of miles or so, which acts as a sort of abbey guest-house to the chief shrine. In the case of Kedar Nath this is Akhi Math, and in that of Badri Narayan it is Joshi Math. In the last-named there is abundance of evidence that it was originally Saiviate and that the tides of Vaishnavism flowed over this pre-existing

condition. Some think that the very name is a corruption of Jyotir Math, the probable older form.

The temple of Badri itself is exceedingly modern. That will be a glad day in India when a developed respect for history shall guide the councils of all who have to do with the building and repair of temples! At present they see no reason why the mortar of the master-builder should not be smeared all over the beautiful weathered surfaces of the grey stones of the temples. They call it necessary repairs. As if a skin that was renewed every few years could ever look beautiful to those who loved us! I know nothing that so puts one out of tune for worship as a look of aggressive newness on the face of a church or temple that one knows to be old and fraught with many memories! Even at Joshi Math, the main sanctuary has successfully rid itself of most of the traces of its past. In this case, however, there is a *mala* of smaller shrines, built on the edge of the magnificent plinth-like terrace, which have never been interfered with, though some of them have fallen into decay, and these witness to the history of the spot in unmistakable terms. At Badri Narayan itself, the gateway and ramparts of the temple are not so modern. They are built in a Mogul style of somewhat late type. Within, the only minor shrine is that of Ghanta-Karna, the Bell-eared, who acts as Kotwal of the sanctuary. In temples of the older Vaishnavism, this place would have been held by Garura, as we see throughout the whole Himalayan region.

Badri Narayan, then, stands before us as the evident crowning example of that mediæval uprising of Vaishnavism which began with Ramanuja, and found one of its greatest voices in Tulsidas' Ramayana. This Vaishnavism was all-powerful, apparently, in the Deccan and in the South. But in Bengal the wonderful personality of Chaitanya gave it a turn of expression which was peculiar to that province and thus prevented the Vaishnavism of his countrymen from taking the more theological, less mythological, form of Lukshmi-Narayan. Hari-Hara moreover is obviously the creation of the same age. How unthinkable to us now that there was a time when pious and devout men would not consent even to hear the name of Vishnu! Yet such was undoubtedly the case, and, more by token, here is the very head and front of such offending crept up to stand outside His shrine, and, in an excess of passionate chivalry, to guard it from all harm!

An interesting question is whether Narayan was always coupled with Lukshmi. The little shrine of Vishnu-Prayyag, at the junction of the Dhanli and Vishnu Ganga, just below Joshi Math, inclines me to think not. Here we have an altar of Narayan alone, and on the opposite side of the narrow pathway, obviously a later addition, a tiny chamber of Lukshmi. This looks as if the pairing of the two had been a subsequent concession to popular ideas, which must have been long tinged with the tendency to assume such a duality in the Divine Nature.

The Vaishnava conquest it represented, even at Kedar Nath itself, by the neighbouring shrine of Triyugi Narayan,—the Narayan of three aeons—on a companion mountain. The fire which burns there is said to have been lighted long ago in Satya-Yuga—a claim which may possibly be an indication of veritable antiquity.

This is not impossible, because there really was an older Vaishnavism, and we do here and there come upon the attempts of the mediæval revival to identify itself with it. The Siva of Sankaracharya, even at Kedar Nath, supersedes a worship of Satya-Narayan. The same has also happened at the almost-deserted temples of Bhethu Chatty, near Gupta Kashi. Now whoever Satya-Narayan really was, he is claimed by Vaishnavas as one of the forms of Narayana, and it is clear that he would be equally so held in the early Ramanuja period. From the time that Hinduism begins to emerge into definition and distinctness, against the contrasting background of Buddhism, the whole history of Indian thought becomes a sort of plaiting together of these two threads, in which first one and then the other may be expected to reappear continually. At Kedar Nath there is indeed the question whether the worship of Devi did not intervene, as the officially recognised form, between Satya-Narayan and the Sankaracharyan Siva. Certainly in the village-street there, is a small chapel containing the nine forms of the Mother in sculpture. At Bhethu Chatty, however, there is no

trace of Devi-worship. There, Siva follows hard on Satya-Narayan, and there is no long distance of time even between the building of their respective temples. A certain Gandharan pattern is indeed integral to both, and this, if my own theory is correct, might possibly help us to date the earlier as subsequent to 540 A.D.!

The worship of Devi has a long and important history of its own, which with the help of these Himalayan regions, is not difficult to make out. Did it come down upon India, already elaborated and highly formalised, from Thibet or China? There is much to favour this view. Amongst other things, the two most perfect shrines of ancient Mother-worship left in India are both on, or close to, roads between Thibet and the plains. One is Devi Dhura, between Kathgodam and Thibet, and the other is Gopeswar, near Chamoli or Lall Sanghao, on the Badri Narayan route. There is no denying the immense influence that China has had, in developing some of the Indian images, but chiefly, I suspect, those of the Mother. It would also seem as if the moment of the introduction of Devi in this form had been the same time at which the worship of Śiva took on a phallic complexion, for pundits, and pujaris, though never for the people as a whole.

The highly elaborate worship of Devi was always associated with Siva, apparently, as the guardian of Her shrines. And the characteristic form of Siva at the period in question is that of Varaha-Mihira namely

a cube surmounted by an octagon surmounted by the rounded top of the Siva proper. These Sivas we find constantly, at all the older religious sites, throughout the mountains. And they always mark a development of the site prior to Sankaracharya. But nowhere do they occur in such abundance as at Gopeswar and Devi Dhura. Gopeswar indeed carries proofs of having been a recognised religions establishment even before this, for I found there no less than two still surviving, of the four-headed Sivas that are commonly known as Brahmas. This is eloquent and incontestable evidence that in all propability the shrine was originally a Buddhist monastery. Further evidence in the same direction is afforded by the chaitya-form of the little shrine of Anusuya Devi, standing to the side of the main temple.

With Buddhism we come to the bedrock of Himalayan religion. There is only a trace here and there. Most of the evidence is built upon inference. One or two of these chaitya-like buildings, and here and there the head of a bodhisattva are all the direct testimony that I have been able to find, yet it seems probable that the first religious organisation of the Himalayas was the work of Buddhism, that all subsequent movements poured their influence in upon the spots which that first enthusiasm had created, and that therefore all the most ancient sites in the Himawant derive their authority and sanctity from the Buddhist orders.

Conspicuous amongst such are those village-

squares which are really the temple-close made into bazaar and inn. To this type belong Agastyamuni, Gupta Kashi, Gouri Kunda, Akhi Math, Gopeswara, Joshi Math, the court of Kamaleswar in Srinagar, and more obscurely Kedar Nath itself. This is the kind of inn-yard that saw in England the development of the drama. How full of interest it is! One arrives in the village with all one's baggage, and beasts of burden, and servants, to spend a few hours, and be off, mayhap, before dawn the following morning. One is accorded a place of bivouac in one of the great verandahs that look down upon the court, and at once one becomes part and parcel of the village life. At the far end yonder is the door that leads into the temple cloister itself, if indeed it does not happen that the shrine is reared in the very midst of the scene before us. Coming and going, going and coming, are brahmins and friars, merchants and travellers, and simple pilgrims. Here we watch some grave ceremony of incantation, there again we see a family at their midday meal. Beneath us a moment later is raised the cry of 'thief' and the patriarchal brahmin appears, to lead away into the more decent seclusion of the temple-precincts an excited woman, her embarassed husband, and the remonstrating youth who stands charged with the villainy. How easy and delightful it would be to fill the court at nightfall with a crowd of villagers, for a magic-lantern lecture, or a Mahabharata katha-kathā! A party of Bengali students did something of the sort a few years ago, headed

by the monk Sadananda, and the auditors came, I have heard, from twelve and fifteen miles, to enjoy the treat.

The pre-historic elements of Hinduism are not missing from even this cursory glimpse of the Himalayas. There has been a definite Mahabharata period when the whole culture-energy of the region seems to have been devoted to dramatising and appropriating the heroes and incidents of the great epic. There is a little river called Vyasa-Ganga, upon whose banks stands a tiny chapel containing an image of Vyasa! And beyond its boundary lie practically all the associations of the five Pandavas, ending in the great snowy road of the Mahaprasthana at Kedar Nath itself. Could evidence have been clearer that there was once an attempt, definite, deliberate, and literary, to impose the ideas of the national epic on an Himalayan kingdom, of which perhaps this particular river was the frontier, and to parcel it out into a sort of Mahabharata holy land? At Kathgodam, the Pandavas are said to have begun their last pilgrimage, and their road leads us past Bhim Tal, or the lake of Bhima, and past Dhari, their treasury, while the ice-scratches on the rock at Devi Dhura are said to mark the place of their pachisi-board! The caves on the road to Kedar Nath are assigned each to one of the princes, to Draupadi, or to the dog. There are wayside shrines dedicated to them. One of the great prayags is sacred to the name of Karna. But amongst all this, the one name

that impresses one as genuinely pre-Mahabharatan, that is as non-literary, and savouring of the soil itself, is that of the Hindu Herakles, Bhima, or, as the people call him, Bhima Sena. When we come to the village of Agastyamuni, indeed, and learn that the tale of the sage who drank up the ocean is also told of the vale of Kashmir, which is merely a larger edition of this little valley of Agastyamuni, we can see for ourselves that the story is a pretty geological myth of a ravine that was once a lake. And we feel again a thrill of wonder at the encyclopædic character of the information that went to make up the great poem. But the fact that the geography of distant Himalayan valleys receives notice shows in fact that the culture-level of this neighbourhood was then such as to contribute scholars to the board of composition. Thus we come back to the integral and important part which Himawant must have played in Indian thought ever since the Asokan organisation of the propaganda. From the facts of literary history it would appear probable that the Mahabharata period between Vyasa-Ganga and Kathgodam must have coincided with the completion of the poem about the middle of the Gupta era. The eagerness of the great dynasty and therefore by inference of all friendly and allied states to publish the mighty work and their idea that it constituted a kind of educational scheme is evident enough in many other directions. Hence we cannot be surprised at the energy with which it seems to

have been taken up here, nor at the appeal that has been made to the pride of the people and to their love for their beautiful country, in giving them as it were a local claim upon it all.

The systematic way in which this was attempted becomes particularly incontestable when we come upon such traces as the shrine and image of Sringi at Agastyamuni. At Srinagar again there is a temple of the Five Pandavas. And every here and there we come upon some muni or other as for instance Kapila Muni. One can imagine the miracle plays of the Mahabharata that must have taken place from time to time in these temple courts, half theatre half college, like the rude dramas still seen in the villages of Maharashtra! And what about the Ramayana? Was it an earlier, or a rival scheme to that of the Mahabharata? Close to Hrishikesh in Lakshman-Jhula begins its terminology, which comes to a head at Devaprayag, in the temple of Ramachandra. Here we realise what a large and compelling synthesis was offered by early Vaishnavism, for just as we cannot fail to understand that Ganesha has been gathered into the Saivite scheme from older pre-historic sources, so here we find Hanumana behind and Garura in front of the temple as guardians, and know suddenly that vast antiquity which these two represent. It must always be a feature of dominant religions that when fully formed they incorporate the debris of preceding systems. Garuri is a strangely persistent element of Himalayan religion. He crops up occasionally even

on the road to Kedar Nath itself. How remote may have been this at ancient sites is that of synthesis behind the actual dedication.

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